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**Publisher:** Mike Cook  
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DRAGON Magazine (ISSN 0279-6848) is published monthly for a subscription price of \$24 per year by Dragon Publishing, a division of TSR, Inc. The mailing address of Dragon Publishing for all material except subscription orders is P.O. Box 110, Lake Geneva WI 53147.

DRAGON Magazine is available at hobby stores and bookstores throughout the United States and Canada, and through a limited number of overseas outlets. Subscription rates are as follows: \$24 for 12 issues sent to an address in the U.S., \$30 in Canada; \$50 U.S. for 12 issues sent via surface mail or \$95 for 12 issues sent via air mail to any other country. All subscription payments must be in advance, and should be sent to Dragon Publishing, P.O. Box 72089, Chicago IL 60690.

A limited quantity of certain back issues of DRAGON Magazine can be purchased from the Dungeon Hobby Shop. (See the list available issues printed elsewhere in each magazine.) Payment in advance by check or money order must accompany all orders. Payments cannot be made through a credit card, and orders cannot be taken nor merchandise reserved by telephone. Neither an individual customer nor an institution can be billed for a subscription order or a back-issue purchase unless prior arrangements are made.

The issue of expiration for each subscription is printed on the mailing label for each subscriber's copy of the magazine. Changes of address for the delivery of subscription copies must be received at least six weeks prior to the effective date of the change in order to insure uninterrupted delivery.

All material published in DRAGON Magazine becomes the exclusive property of the publisher upon publication, unless special arrangements to the contrary are made prior to publication. DRAGON Magazine welcomes unsolicited submissions of written material and artwork; however, no responsibility for such submissions can be assumed by the publisher in any event. Any submission which is accompanied by a self-addressed, stamped envelope of sufficient size will be returned if it cannot be published.

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Second-class postage paid at Lake Geneva, Wis., and additional mailing offices.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to Dragon Publishing, P.O. Box 110, Lake Geneva WI 53147. USPS 318-790, ISSN 0279-6848.

## No foolin'

It wasn't until the last hour before deadline that I settled on the subject for this column. Actually, Roger decided it for me while he was putting down the type to finish page 93.

"Not much of an April Fool's issue, is it?" he said.

No, it sure isn't. We didn't have room to include any "foolish" material in this issue, like we have in April issues past, and that's bad news enough all by itself. (Well, we enjoyed it, anyway . . .)

Speaking of bad news, you ain't heard nothin' yet. After three years, Phil Foglio has decided to give himself some time away from the rigors of chronicling Phil & Dixie. The last installment of "What's New" is in this issue, and that's reason number two why we're not in an April fooling mood this year. But maybe it's fitting that we didn't upstage Phil & Dixie in their last appearance by using a lot of other funny stuff in the magazine. Most of the jokes in this issue are brought to you by Phil Foglio, and he uses his three pages very well.

With pride in one eye and a bit of a tear welling up in the other, we present in this issue of DRAGON® Magazine the first edition of the ARESTM Science Fiction Gaming Section. We're proud of what we're going to be doing from now on to serve the SF gaming public, but at the same time we're going to miss ARES Magazine just as much as its readers will.

Maybe in a month or two, when the memories dim and the space opens up a bit, we'll bring in our freelance leprechauns to slap together some "foolish" pages. (Some of the stuff we've collected is too good to hold onto until next April.) But right now, we just don't feel like foolin'.







April, in the area where this dragon's lair is located, is a month of change: It's not winter any more, but it's sure not summer yet, either

(Wisconsin does have something called spring, but it always either feels like winter or summer, and the name can safely be ignored.) . . . All of which is to introduce a lot of changes that are happening or about to happen to DRAGON® Magazine.

This issue contains the first ARES™ Science Fiction Gaming Section, about which the editors have much more to say starting on page 69.

This issue contains the last installment of Phil Foglio's "What's New?" comic strip — at least for now — for reasons that are explained on page 93.

And, we're presenting the first tournament-style AD&D™ module we've ever done, *The Twofold Talisman*, beginning on page 43. It's also the first two-part adventure we've published, and we're looking forward to hearing what you think.

Detail-minded artist Dean Morrissey has returned to our cover for the first time since issue #70 with a painting that's not swords & sorcery, but undeniably a piece of fantasy art. He calls it *Ian Dinwood's Martian Moment*, and describes it as "a scene in an earthly Victorian parlor momentarily transposed (at least in Ian's mind) to a tract of scape on the surface of Mars." So that's why the sky is pink.

The first essay to make it from Steven Inniss's typewriter to our pages is this month's lead article, "A cast of strange familiars," offering a few dozen ways to liven up the magic-user's find familiar spell.

In this issue's ecology article, Ed Greenwood explains how a trapper does what it does; unfortunately, why is still something only another trapper can tell. . . .

. . . And then there's the rakshasa, where the why is fairly obvious, but the what (as in "What does it look like?") is the unanswered question. Scott Bennie has delved into the myths and legends of India to shed some light on rakshasas and their even more powerful kin, the Knights and Lords — and Ravanna, the baddest of all.

Those of you who savor stories about the DUNGEONS & DRAGONS® game should be satisfied, for now, by "And then there were three," Frank Mentzer's preview of the soon-to-be-released D&D® Companion Set, plus "FRP's gilded chestnuts" by Ken Rolston, in which he describes and compares the newest revisions of the D&D® game and the *Chivalry & Sorcery*™ game.

And, if you haven't noticed already, take a peek at the small type on the left and welcome Ken Rolston and Katharine Kerr to the ranks of Contributing Editors for DRAGON Magazine. (Yep, another change.) As for why we wanted them to have the titles: If you've seen more than a couple of issues of this magazine, you've already read the reasons. — KM



## A rare peryton?

Dear Dragon,

In the February issue (#82), I quickly turned to page 10 for the article on perytons. Somehow, the picture just didn't look right, and on page 28 of the *Monster Manual* it states that, "its claws are too weak to use." The picture on page 10 showed hooves, not claws. That would be a rare specimen indeed!

Peter Delaney  
Kingston, N.Y.

*Maybe not as rare as you think, Peter. When we researched the peryton for that "ecology" presentation, we had a hard time finding information on what this semi-legendary beast looked like. The illustration is based on a passage in "The Book of Imaginary Beings" by Jorge Luis Borges, where that author quotes an unnamed Greek scholar who had this to say about the peryton's appearance: "The Perytons had their original dwelling in Atlantis and are half deer, half bird. They have the deer's head and legs. As for its body, it is perfectly avian, with corresponding wings and plumage. . . ."*

*And that's where the hooves came from. We decided to go with the unnamed Greek instead of the *Monster Manual* for three reasons: (1) the "deer's legs" make for a creature that's even more bizarre-looking than the one in the *Monster Manual*; (2) the peryton doesn't make any appreciable use of its claws anyway (no attacks), so they might as well be hooves if that's what the Greek says they are; and (3) we just wanted to see if someone would notice.*

*So, if we assume that the peryton in the AD&D™ game is derived from the Peryton of Greek legend, maybe most perytons should have hooves, and perhaps the one pictured in the *Monster Manual* is the rare one. — KM*

## That's the idea!

Dear Editor,

In issue #82 you had an article called "Enhancing the Enchanter." In it, an amulet made from a wyvern horn which could detect magic was discussed. Although the amulet was for Dragonquest, I was wondering if the same amulet could be applied in AD&D play; and, if so, what would its restrictions be?

Seth Walther  
Marietta, Ohio

*Seth, you've got the right idea. There's no reason why a wyvern-horn amulet can't exist in an AD&D™ universe — and no reason why you can't make the fairly simple adaptation from DRAGONQUEST™ game terminology into terms used in the AD&D rules. You'll need a wyvern horn (do wyverns in the AD&D rules have horns? Oh, well . . .) and some kind of powerful magic (enchant an item, wish), and you'll end up with an amulet that can detect*

*magic in essentially the same ways that the version in the article does. Restrictions? Nothing to worry about, as long as the new amulet is not so over-powerful that it unbalances the game in favor of a character who wears one.*

*This simple conversion works not only for objects described in DRAGON® magazine articles, but also for procedures and concepts that just happen to be written in the "language" of a certain game. Don't be turned off by an article that seems to be about a game you don't play — sure, the words in the article are about that "other" game, but the ideas behind those words may hit you right between the ears if you give 'em a chance. — KM*

## Sleeping damage?

Dear Dragon,

I have a question about "Taking the sting out of poison" (issue #82). The run-time for sleep gas was printed "1hp/rd." Is this to imply that the victim takes damage as well as falling asleep, or was this merely a misprint? (All other sleep poison had a run time of 1 round). Also, was contact sleep poison excluded for a reason?

Brian Dvoretz  
Smithtown, N.Y.

*The run-time figure for sleep gas should be simply "1 round," like all the other sleep poisons in the article. The mistake crept into Chris Landsea's original manuscript while he was meticulously typing out the poison gas table, and never crept back out. I can imagine a special kind of sleep poison that also does damage, but that wasn't within the scope of the article, and we didn't mean to give anyone the impression that "sleeping damage" is possible.*

*I haven't checked with Chris to find out why he didn't include contact sleep poison, but I assume the omission was intentional. Maybe the chemists and alchemists of the AD&D world (Chris Landsea's version, at least) just don't know how to make such stuff — and maybe the world is better off because of that. — KM*

## No limb to stand on

Dear Editor:

I've been playing D&D and AD&D for six years and have been reading DRAGON for almost as long (since issue #38). Since then, *Out on a Limb* has dried up. In the beginning there was light — the anti-Monty Haul campaign. After a while, though, everyone's eyes got sore. One can only read so much on the pros and cons of butchering gods. Finally a voice from the bowels of DRAGON yelled "Enough!" and that was it. The light, so to speak, got boring. . . .

However, all semblance of controversy has died since then. Letters like "I liked" or "I didn't like" or "Where can I get issue #. . ." are actually



quite dull. This reflects an essence of difference from campaign to campaign. This is to be expected, and all of them are right in their own way. Differences in game theory are far more interesting (while, granted, also next to unsolvable) if for no other reason than it keeps you on your toes. John Stuart Mill, in his essay *On Liberty*, wrote that opposing views are necessary for three reasons:

1. Correct views block out incorrect ones.
2. No "truth" is complete. Opposing views weed the smaller untruths out of the overall "truth."
3. A correct view is stabilized and strengthened by being challenged.

Well, *Out on a Limb* no longer supports any views at all.

"Now," you may say, "we show you The Forum, our new column where our readers can get things off their chests." But isn't that what *Out on a Limb* was meant to be for?

Maybe I'm wrong. I don't know, but it seems something is lost somewhere; in the last issue, only one person went *Out on a Limb* (and I think you were a little rough on him, though I agree with you). Everyone else asked very safe (and by now redundant) questions. I think (and it pains me immensely to say this) that *Out on a Limb* has outlived its usefulness.

If you won't ditch it altogether, at least shorten it and call it something more appropriate . . . like "Letters."

Ken Marshall  
Saratoga Springs, N.Y.

*Like the letter writer says himself, everybody is "right in their own way" And Ken's observations are basically valid; on the points where we seem*

*to disagree, I think he may simply be failing to see the forest for the trees, and he's a little too preoccupied with nomenclature.*

No, "*Out on a Limb*" isn't what it used to be. It changed because our outlook of the magazine changed, and because our readership has changed drastically since the halcyon days of issue #38. In order to devote as much space as possible to feature articles, we shortened up on the space we allocate for letters to the editor. We stopped (for the most part) printing lengthy letters, with sometimes even lengthier responses, because they used up too much of that precious space too fast.

At the same time, we saw an even greater need for a way that our readers could get answers — clarifications on the wording of an article; the straightening out of a mistake, sometimes a statement of policy — that would help them understand and appreciate the product they're paying for. "*Out on a Limb*," as our only vehicle for publishing letters to the editor, began to serve this new purpose. If some of the questions and answers we print seem obvious or redundant to you old-timers, try to have patience. The number of people who read *DRAGON*® Magazine has multiplied by three or four since issue #38, and to that not-so-silent majority, their questions are new, and the answers are, too.

Now, finally we've re-committed some space to the sort of thing we used to put in "*Out on a Limb*," and in less than original fashion we're calling it The Forum. I would have thought that people like Ken would applaud The Forum; instead, he seems upset because the column for readers' opinions isn't called out on a Limb any more. To that, I have two things to say: First, don't think in terms of what it's called — think in terms of what it is, and try to realize that the old

"*Out on a Limb*" isn't gone after all; it's back, after an absence, under another name. Second, we might just solve the whole problem anyway by changing the names of both of our letters columns. Any suggestions? — KM

## Map mistakes

Dear Editor,

I have found an error in "*Barnacus: City in Peril*" (#80). The text states that there are three tailor shops — 54, 55, and 56. No problem, except that on the map of the city there are four tailor shops — two 54's, a 55, and a 56.

Ken Bender

Townville, Pa.

Dear Dragon,

In "*The Ruins of Andril*" (issue #81), the maps do not contain a room #38 but the text refers to it. Where is room #38?

Danny Russell  
Russell, Ky.

Okay. . . Ken, remove the "54" from the building on the east side of the river (turning it into a residence, or whatever else you want), and now *Barnacus* is back to three tailor shops. And while you're at it, take out the extra spice merchant (#61) that seems to have set up shop on the east side of the river

Danny, put a "38" in the chamber right in the middle of the fourth level map on page 54. This room connects the fourth level to the rest of the complex by way of the shaft leading up to the floor of room 37. — KM

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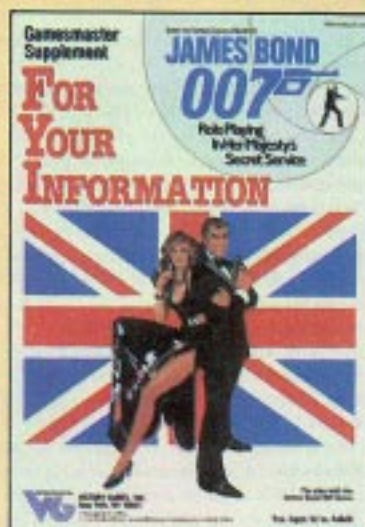
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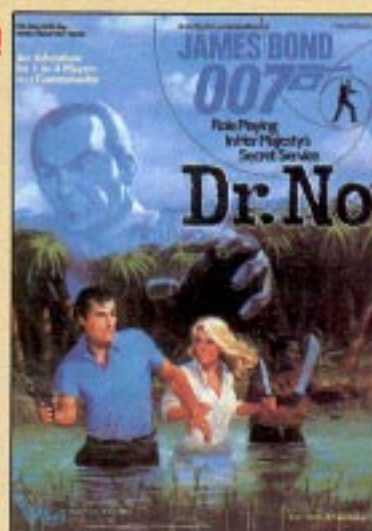


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# The forum

## Opinions and observations

After reading all the letters and articles about other planes that have been appearing in DRAGON recently, I'd like to put in my own two cents:

Having the elemental planes as physical locations where characters can travel and adventure is all very nice for gaming purposes, but a little serious thought shows how flawed it is. Elemental planes should be abstract, all-pervading fields, not places to go and kill creatures.

It's all a matter of mechanics: Is there any way to structure the elemental planes so that they make sense? They are obviously not organized in a literal "ring" (as in the Players Handbook) or square (as in Gary Gygax's new method). These forms are just representations of the planes' relationships to each other.

This is all very easy to deal with. However, now that we know what the planes are not, what are they? Well, the elemental planes are obviously meant to be vast spaces of infinite substances, extending in all directions and with no real boundaries. It is not very practical to think of them as limited spaces, because all sorts of problems arise (how do they end, what is beyond them, and so on) which, if answered, would result in something not at all like the conventional concept of planes, and which would probably also be downright ridiculous (like separating the planes by ultra-cosmic impenetrable walls, for instance). All right then, the elemental planes are infinite. Another problem arises: What about

gravity? In an infinite space, what would be the center of gravity, and how would it work? One could assume that there is no gravity on the elemental planes, but then several problems arise, the most obvious of which occurs in the plane of water: without gravity, water forms into small spheres which float in the air; therefore, the plane of water would be an endless expanse of water-spheres floating around. This is far from the conventional idea of the plane of water, and it would certainly not support any aquatic life.

Let's assume, though, that you find a reasonable way of having a source and center of gravity in the elemental planes. If you have a center of gravity, then, obviously, all things will be drawn toward it. Therefore, anyone who appears on the elemental plane of water would be instantly crushed by the *infinite* amount of water pressing down upon him. This is true even on the elemental plane of air; though the weight of air is negligible on Earth, an infinite amount pressing down on something is more than enough to squash it to a pulp. No, as they are, the elemental planes just don't make sense.

As far as my campaign is concerned, the elemental planes are abstract, intangible forces surrounding and permeating the Prime Material Plane. These elemental planes give the Prime Material Plane all of its substance, and the Prime Material Plane provides the bonding force which resolves the separate elements into distinct shapes. The elemental planes are non-existent in spatial terms. They are an abstract concept; there is no life on the planes themselves, and it is impossible to go there by any means.

DMs reading this can either use an abstract system like the one I have suggested, or they can take the ever-so-common escape route of saying that the construction of the planes is "beyond human comprehension" and therefore doesn't have to make sense.

Edward R. Masters  
Washington, D.C.

\* \* \* \*

It would be wise to devote a major portion of the Forum to new ideas rather than criticism which is mostly superficial and based largely on personal opinion. Instead of hearing about what's wrong with an article, let's hear about new campaign ideas, magic items, and monsters. "Out on a Limb" seems naturally suited towards criticism, while The Forum could be used more productively as an idea exchange between Dungeon Masters and players. I encourage other readers who agree — or disagree — with my suggestion to write in.

Peter Bregoli  
Braintree, Mass.

\* \* \* \*

The DMG's combat charts have a problem: for every blow, one must look up the precise chance among five tables and the appropriate level and AC, and then further adjust it for magic weapons, surprise, etc. Moreover, it's almost impossible for the DM to hide a monster's AC (and should players know, as soon as they swing, that the evil fighter's chainmail is +3?), unless he simply rolls the die himself . . . which leaves

players both alienated from the battle and *completely* in the dark. Shouldn't a combatant know how good his swing was, but not his foe's exact degree of protection, and so be able to slowly "feel out" the enemy's defenses?

My solution is to take the combat charts and reduce them to a plus to hit — just as is done with strength, magic weapons, etc. This is done by finding the appropriate chart and the right level/HD, and subtracting the number required to hit AC: 10 from 11. For example, the fighter chart would yield "0, +1, +3, +5, +7, +9, +11, 3, +15, +17" from left to right, unless you use the (excellent) chart on p. 48 of DRAGON #80.

Players can attack by simply rolling d20, *subtracting* this number and other plusses and announcing the resulting number to the DM. If it is less than or equal to the monster's AC, the character hits. The DM can either do the same [for monsters], or (if he believes a monster's modified roll should be as invisible as its AC) he can ask for or keep records of the characters' ACs and simply announce a hit or a miss.

Actually, the charts are weighted to give weak combatants some chance at a very tough foe, by listing 20 six times before going on to 21. This converts to giving any adjusted combat roll of 1 or less an extra +5 to hit. Or you can say a natural 1 always hits (and a natural 20 always misses?) and keep both sides on their plate-armored toes.

If it seems wrong to subtract a "plus," think of it as indicating a benefit and a minus meaning a penalty, just as magic armor does. Or subtract all ACs from 21, so a higher AC number means better protection, and say that a high roll — adding plusses and "improving" 20's as in the paragraph above — is a hit.

I hope this system makes it easier for all those suffering heroes to down their foes with less mental fumbling, or at least die more quickly when their own luck runs out.

Ken Hughes  
Ann Arbor, Mich.

\* \* \* \*

I would like to discuss two items that may or may not be related, depending upon a particular point of view: DRAGON magazine and the GEN CON game convention. Assuming that they *are* related to a goodly degree, inasmuch as both are results of concentrated efforts of divisions of TSR, Inc., I'll make my comments with that in mind.

I've attended the last four GEN CONs and have also read DRAGON during that same period. In that time, I have never understood why the magazine *published* by TSR has virtually ignored any extensive follow-up of the game convention *presented* by TSR. (I seem to recall a photo and a small article concerning GEN CON XII, and I know you now publish the pre-registration schedule in the June issue.) With the exception of Kim Eastland's fine follow-ups on the miniatures' competition, there have been no articles of any depth that concern the last four GEN CONs. With the wealth of subject matter that would be available from such an event, it baffles me as to why DRAGON has not plundered this treasure trove of game tournaments, seminars, exhibits, art shows, ad infinitum, and turned your magazine into a complete publica-

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tion. Without articles, reviews, results and photos of TSR's convention, TSR's magazine is, indeed, incomplete.

Now, I know (as you have stated in your editorials several times) that you do not want to be known as a "house organ," and maybe this is why you haven't done any follow-ups on TSR's convention. As far as I'm concerned (and you said you wanted to hear our opinions) it doesn't really matter if you are hung up on what you consider to be a derogatory title, your magazine is published by TSR, so why not take advantage and have one division of TSR link hands with another. Of course, I am not aware of what ethics might be involved here, if any, but it appears painfully logical that if TSR puts on the biggest game convention around, why not use their own magazine to further both the convention and the magazine?

And if you're worried that "house organ" will attach some sort of stigma to DRAGON, you need fear not. With the influx of gaming magazines in the past four years, DRAGON still retains (and constantly improves on) its quality and professionalism. You truly lost the "house organ" monkey on your back when you stopped printing E. Gary Gyga's diatribes against the entire gaming industry. Gary Gyga's war with his competitors has absolutely no bearing on any of us average gamers.

But, GEN CON does have a bearing on readers of DRAGON: it presents what you publish, *live*. Articles, reviews of seminars and exhibits and art shows, some tournament results, and photos would not only renew memories and give news to those of us who attend, but it would give valuable information and stir the interest of a gamer who may be reluctant to attend. In the end, it means more and more satisfied DRAGON readers, as well as new convention attendees who

can find out how much fun a large scale convention can be.

Anyway, these are just one man's comments and opinions on a couple of subjects that could and should complement each other, and I hope you take this constructive criticism in the light that it was given and deal with the situations.

Bill Cavalier  
Rolling Prairie, Ind.

\* \* \* \*

Your article, "Taking the sting out of poison" (issue #81), was fantastic, but there was one point not covered. It should be possible to drink a potion of healing or extra-healing to counteract poison already in the system as long as the onset time of the poison is less than the time it takes to find, drink, and have the potion take effect. In other words, feeding a potion to a dead adventurer won't work.

If the poison is fatal (e.g. types E, F, G insinuate), then the adventurer will have hit points equal to how much the healing potion healed. For example, a fighter fails his saving throw for insinuate type E. He drinks a potion of healing, and after the poison has taken effect he would have 4-10 hit points.

It should be noted that for the poisons which cause damage, ingesting a potion may have no effect because even with the healing, the adventurer may be below -10 hit points. Healing spells would have a similar effect, although I would probably rule that a cure light wounds couldn't counteract a death poison. At most, a cure light wounds would allow another saving throw vs. poison and if the adventurer makes it, he would have zero hit points.

Jeff Naiman  
Woodbridge, Conn.

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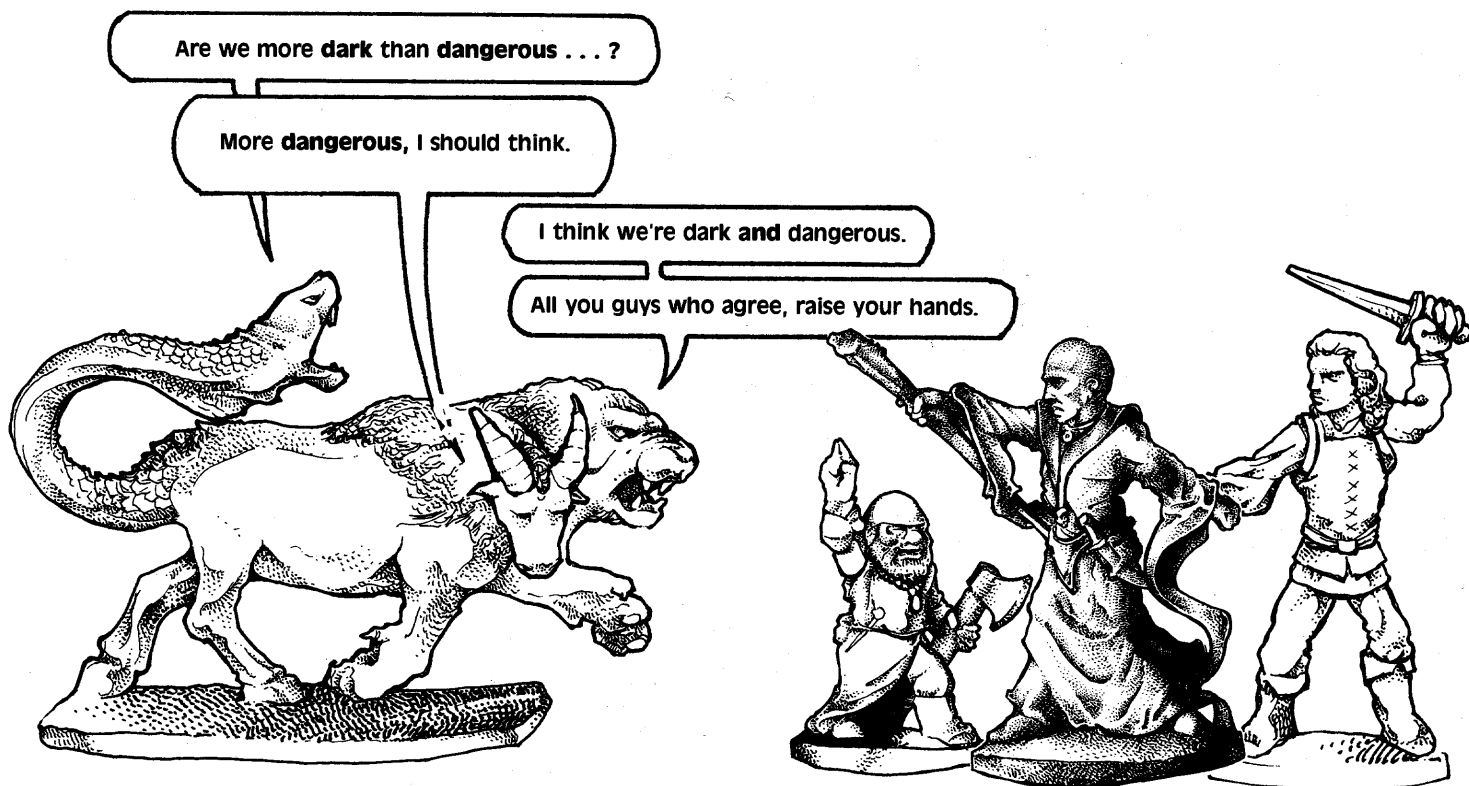
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# A cast of strange familiars

M-U's best friend comes in many shapes and sizes

by Stephen Inniss

Experienced gamers usually regard additions to a game's rules with suspicion — and rightly so. Such additions often make play more complicated and time-consuming, instead of improving the experience or making it more enjoyable. Those who have tinkered with the AD&D™ combat system can attest to this problem: Vexing new details start to bog down the game. At best, players wonder what happened to the adventure. At worst, they forget what the adventure was. But fortunately for meddlers, there are *some* parts of the AD&D game system that can be improved with a relatively small investment of time.

One such part is the first level magic-user spell *find familiar*. The results of this spell can be very important, and once determined, they are frequently referred to. Because *find familiar* is usually cast very infrequently (sometimes only once per magic-user), a more detailed version can offer a real improvement without detracting from the adventure. Expansion and modification of this spell has merit in its own right, and — as is often the case in complex constructions like the AD&D game — the new information can enhance other parts of the game, too.

Like most fantasy role-playing material, the *find familiar* spell has its roots outside of the game system. Familiars played an important role in the wizardry of folklore, serving as sorcerer's helpers, or advising people with strange talents. Though some familiars were invisible, most were, or took the shape of, small animals. In Europe, particularly in England, belief in familiars was common. The familiar was attributed to witches, thereby earning an evil reputation. Elsewhere, the view of familiars was less negative. Siberian shamans, for example, were said to employ familiars as guards and guides to the spirit world.

Not only folklore has influenced the game; familiars are popular in fantasy literature as well. In recent works, one need only think of the mage Ged's otak (little monkeylike creature) in Ursula K. LeGuin's *A Wizard of Earthsea*, or the unpleasant companion in Fritz Leiber's short story "Ill Met in Lankhmar."

But if folklore and fantasy literature inspired the *find familiar* spell, then they didn't provide *enough* inspiration. Rules for the spell are incomplete and unbalanced. They are incomplete in that the possibilities for normal animal familiars are restricted to a few European creatures without even encompassing the folk beliefs of that continent. It seems to be assumed that a familiar

will be summoned near human habitation (where else are black cats found?) and in a temperate climate with Old World fauna. But what if a magic-user summons a familiar in a tropical rain forest, on a small island, or in the arctic? The unimaginative response would be to restrict or eliminate the chance of success. But this seems dull when there might be so many other possibilities. A number of real-world animals would make good familiars in an AD&D setting, and many of these beasts were once actually believed to serve as familiars.

The menagerie described below expands and modifies the group of official AD&D familiars. You may want to make further changes for your campaign, but before you use or alter this material, you should understand how the animals below were chosen. Subjects taken into account include: armor class and hit points, size and combat prowess, adaptability, appearance and reputation, and commonness.

Creatures that deviate sharply from the standard familiar's armor class of 7 and the standard hit point range of 2-4 (the statistics given with the spell) have been eliminated from the selection below. Some flexibility regarding these statistics is necessary, however. As the spell stands, a lowly toad familiar becomes harder to hit than many humans, and just as powerful as a hawk familiar. We can "justify" this increase in power by assuming the toad gained more ability when it became a familiar. A change for the better is acceptable. A change for the worse, however, seems unlikely. No animal should become weaker as a familiar than it was as a normal animal. The cat, for instance, now has statistics in *Monster Manual II* which give it a better armor class than 7. Since it is unlikely that only crippled, deficient felines respond to the *find familiar* spell, the cat — and other animals like it — does not take a cut in AC when it becomes a familiar. An effort has been made, however, to not stretch the original spell beyond reason, so nothing smaller than a toad or more powerful than a cat has been allowed. After all, *find familiar* is only a first level spell.

Restricting armor class ratings becomes easier when one accepts that familiars are by nature small animals. In the AD&D game, familiars should be no bigger or heavier than a very large cat (16 pounds maximum). There are a number of good reasons for this. Most, if not all, traditional familiars are small, and so are all of the official familiars. Small size is useful to a creature that serves as a guard, scout, and

spy (as described in the *Players Handbook*). Small animals are more easily concealed in dangerous situations, and they're easier to carry if incapacitated; this becomes increasingly important as their masters rise in level, meeting greater hazards.

Small size may disappoint the sorcerer in search of brawn, but familiars aren't meant to be bodyguards. None of the normal familiars should be more lethal in combat than, say, a hawk. Certainly, venomous animals are inadmissible. The already great range in offensive capability within the group should not be increased. In any case, a physically powerful companion that serves as a magic-user's bodyguard would be redundant. Fighters are already a well established part of the game.

Though they needn't be combat-hardy, familiars should be otherwise adaptable and robust. Without excessive protection and preparation, familiars should be able to go wherever adventurers go: through arctic snowfields, on board ships, across tropic deserts, and into deep, dark caverns. They should be able to survive on simple, prepared rations, or be able to forage for themselves in most places. In general, their requirements should be rather similar to those of humans. The familiar's existence shouldn't be dependent on maintaining wet skin, for instance, or on anything else equally unreasonable.

Perhaps the most important consideration in choosing a new familiar is its appearance and reputation. A creature that sometimes serves as a companion of wizards in fable or fantasy is usually fit for that role in the AD&D game. Failing a reputation as a familiar, the animal should look like it might be found in the company of magic-users. It should be arcane, unusual, and mysterious, or have a bad or uncertain reputation (deserved or not), just as magic does. Nocturnal or darkly colored animals are ideal.

Lastly, animals that are very rare or not well known are not included. Besides requiring excess explanation, many rare animals resemble more common species, so they would simply lengthen an already extensive catalog. Any name given here appears in an ordinary dictionary.

The table on the next page can be used for random determination of familiars — just roll 2d20 when the spell is cast successfully. (The official spell has a 25% failure rate, expressed as "no familiar in range," so check for this failure first.) If a familiar inappropriate to the locale is rolled, check the creature descriptions that follow to see



if another version of the animal would be present. Otherwise, just roll repeatedly until something appropriate is summoned. Each table entry includes the following information: The required dice roll or range of numbers to summon that creature; the name of the creature; its movement rate and damage/attack figures; its special sensory powers; and its armor class, if that figure deviates from the standard AC of 7.

### Movement and damage

The movement rates and damage values in the table were developed with an eye toward conformity with the AD&D system rather than with the real world. Reducing an animal's movement rate to a single number inevitably involves judgment, since sprints and endurance are not taken into account. Determining damage per attack is likewise subjective, so the given values need a word of explanation.

The amount of damage done by a small animal's attack creates a problem. On one hand, even the smallest teeth or claws should undeniably cause some damage, and the AD&D world is one in which halflings can cut down storm giants. On the other hand, it is hard to imagine an animal as small as a weasel seriously harming a human. The combat system is scaled to human sizes, so that one point of damage is considerable. Many ordinary humans have only one hit point between themselves and death. There are a number of ways in which the damage done by small animals could be realistically quantified in the AD&D game; unfortunately, they all involve an increase in complexity that defeats the purpose of a system designed more for ease of play than realism. Critical hits, fractions of hit points, damage varying with the size of the opponent — all of these are unacceptable, so when damage occurs, the minimum amount is one hit point.

Giving a small animal the ability to inflict even one hit point of damage can lead to all sorts of absurdities. In TSR's module S4, *The Lost Caverns of Tsojcanth*, ordinary bats can bite for a single point of damage. Since most bats weigh less than a pound, and their teeth measure a fraction of an inch, these "super-bats" hardly approximate reality. If such ordinary (but dangerous) creatures commonly exist in the AD&D world, one can't help wondering how an ordinary peasant survives. Statistics in the table above make familiars a good deal more dangerous than their real-world equivalents. This can be explained by the familiars' abnormal intelligence, and their ability to attack with greater ferocity and cunning than ordinary animals of their type. Less exceptional animals should not inflict this much damage; for ordinary animals, scale the damage down by 1 point. Otherwise, clerics or druids who can conjure or summon animals will be too powerful. I recommend the unmodified values, however, for animals that are extraordinary — the results of a *reincarnate* spell, for instance, or of a druid's shape-changing

## Thirty-four familiars to find

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| 2 Bat, large: 1"/18"; 1 pt.; superior hearing and night vision; 50% have echolocation.                                      | 21 Kinkajou: 6"; 1-2/1-2; superior night vision, good hearing and olfactory.        |
| 3 Bat, small: 1"/24"; 1 pt.; superior hearing, good night vision, echolocation. AC 4 in prime flying conditions (see text). | 22 Lizard, large: 6"; 1 pt.; wide-angle vision.                                     |
| 4-5 Cat, domestic: 12"; 1-2 / 1 (rear claws 1-2); superior night vision, good hearing and olfactory senses. AC 6.           | 23 Lizard, small: 3"; nil; wide-angle vision.                                       |
| 6-7 Cat, wild: 18"; 1-2 / 1-2 / 1-2 (rear claws 1-2 / 1-2); same as domestic cat. AC 5.                                     | 24 Monkey, large: 12"; 1 pt.; sharp color vision.                                   |
| 8 Civet: 12"; 1-2; same as domestic cat. AC 6.  | 25 Monkey, small: 9"; 1 pt.; sharp color vision.                                    |
| 9 Coati: 12"; 1-2; superior olfactory senses, good hearing and night vision. AC 6.  | 26 Otter: 6 "1"/8"; 1-2; superior underwater and night vision, good olfactory.      |
| 10 Cock: 6"/15"; nil; wide angle vision.  | 27 Owl, large: 1"/18"; 1-2 / 1-2; superior hearing and night vision.                |
| 11-12 Crow: 1"/36"; 1 pt.; sharp, wide-angle color vision.  | 28 Owl, medium: 1"/18"; 1/1; superior hearing and night vision.                     |
| 13 Dog: 15"; 1-3; good night vision, olfactory, and hearing.  | 29 Owl, small: 1"/18"; nil; superior hearing and night vision.                      |
| 14 Fisher: 9"; 1-2; superior olfactory, good hearing & night vision. AC 6.  | 30 Parrot: 1"/18"; nil; wide-angle color vision.                                    |
| 15 Fox: 18"; 1-2; superior olfactory & hearing, good night vision. AC 5.  | 31 Raccoon: 9"; 1-2; good night vision, hearing, and olfactory.                     |
| 16 Gull: 6"/24"/12"; 1 pt.; sharp, wide-angle color vision.   | 32 Rat: 15"; 1 pt.; superior olfactory, good wide-angle night vision, good hearing. |
| 17 Hare: 21"; nil; good wide-angle night vision, good hearing and olfactory.  | 33 Raven: 1"/27"; 1-2; sharp wide-angle color vision. AC 6.                         |
| 18 Hawk, large: 1"/33"; 1-2 / 1-2 / 1; very sharp vision. AC 6.   | 34 Skunk: 12"; 1 pt.; good night vision, hearing, & olfactory.                      |
| 19 Hawk, medium: 1"/35"; / 1 / 1; very sharp vision. AC 5.  | 35 Snake: 9"; 1 pt.; wide-angle vision, good hearing.                               |
| 20 Hawk, small: 1"/36 / 1 / 1 / 1; very sharp vision. AC 5.   | 36 Squirrel: 12"; 1 pt.; sharp wide-angle vision, good hearing.                     |
|   | 37 Toad: 3"; nil; good wide-angle night vision.                                     |
|   | 38 Weasel: 15"; 1 pt.; superior olfactory, good hearing and night vision. AC 6.     |
|   | 39-40 Special, as per spell description.  |

By necessity, a large gap in attack power exists between those animals that inflict a point of damage and those unable to do even that (with damage figures of "nil"). The gap can be narrowed if the DM considers that an attack might not be entirely without effect in game terms, even if it does no "damage." With their abnormal intelligence, familiars could probably choose tender spots for their attacks, like noses, fingertips, and eyes. Such a hit would certainly disrupt spell casting and even hinder fighters (-1 to hit) unless they take some action to remove the annoyance. Those who try to ignore a small animal's attack risk being tripped up, blinded, or thrown off balance. An opponent will find it difficult to concentrate even on physical activity with a rabbit hanging onto his thumb by its teeth, or an owl flapping in his face. However,

animals that cause no "damage" cannot slay even a helpless opponent unless ample time is available. A hawk might kill a sleeping orc, but a hare couldn't do significant damage before its victim awoke.

### Sensory abilities

These powers are not quantified in the AD&D rules, but for the sake of comparison some attempt is made to do so here, since the magic-user receives sensory information from his or her familiar. These notes should also be useful if a druid chooses to shape-change into one of these forms to pick up extra information.

Hearing is described as either good (significantly better than human) or superior (the kind of hearing that locates the slightest sound at 50 paces). The ratings are a generalization, taking into account sensitivity,

audible frequency range, and ability to locate direction. Animals with good hearing have a 10 to 20 percent better chance of locating invisible or hidden creatures (based on hearing alone, when it applies) than creatures with normal hearing — depending, of course, on conditions. Those with superior hearing will be about twice as good.

Animals with olfactory (smelling) abilities

*A bat's echolocation is directional, so it is possible to sneak up behind a bat.*



above the human norm should have the same improved chances of noting hidden enemies as those with good hearing, depending on circumstances and on how good they are at identifying scents. In addition, those with a good sense of smell can track about half as well as a ranger. Those with superior capability can track equally as well as a ranger. The conditions under which tracking is possible, and any information gained by tracking, will of course differ for familiars and rangers, according to their physical and mental capabilities.

Visual ability involves several different aspects. All animals generally have wider fields of vision than humans, but where this is especially so it has been noted. Such animals should be harder to sneak up on, negating surprise in some situations. Color vision is present only in diurnal animals, and as a general rule, diurnal animals that are active only in dim light do not see color well, if at all. Animals that see well in poor light also tend to have poor acuity, since sharpness of vision and sensitivity to light are opposed to one another. This means that animals with sharp vision will have poorer-than-human night sight. In addition, animals with night vision will not see as clearly as a human in good light. Those animals with night vision can see either one (good) or two (superior) classes better than human on the following scale: daylight, twilight, full moon, half moon, starlight, and cloudy with no moon. By this rough measure, an owl (superior) sees as clearly under a full moon as a human does by day. Remember that there must be at least some light for night vision to be effective.

If any of an animal's sensory capabilities are not mentioned in the table, it is safe to assume that the creature in question has a performance poorer or no better a human's in that area.

### Familiar descriptions

Many of the animals named in the table represent a broad group. Even if you have knowledge of the animal that's listed, you should check the description to see what other animals may be included.

**BAT:** Bats that are summoned as familiars come in two sizes, according to mode of life. The smaller bats have bodies ranging from mouse-sized to rat-sized, though they look bigger with their wings fully spread. They are found in any climate that is temperate or warmer. The larger type of bat is found in the tropics, has a wingspan of about five feet, and may weigh up to two pounds.

Bats are usually some shade of brown, though they may be black or have a red or yellow tinge to their fur. Five percent of those summoned to be familiars are albinos as the spell preferentially selects them.

Most bats are able to navigate by sound — an ability known as echolocation. They produce high-pitched squeaks (or sometimes clicks) that are reflected from their surroundings, creating a fairly detailed and accurate picture of the world about them. In game terms, this ability functions in a 60' radius. Although it's not entirely logical, echolocation should not give bats an extra chance of recognizing visual illusions for what they are. The AD&D game does not allow creatures with infravision a bonus for noticing whether an illusion radiates heat, so it must be assumed that an animal with echolocation likewise receives no

(and do not get the benefit of AC 4, as specified in the table), because their wings are lightly furred at best, and they lose heat rapidly.

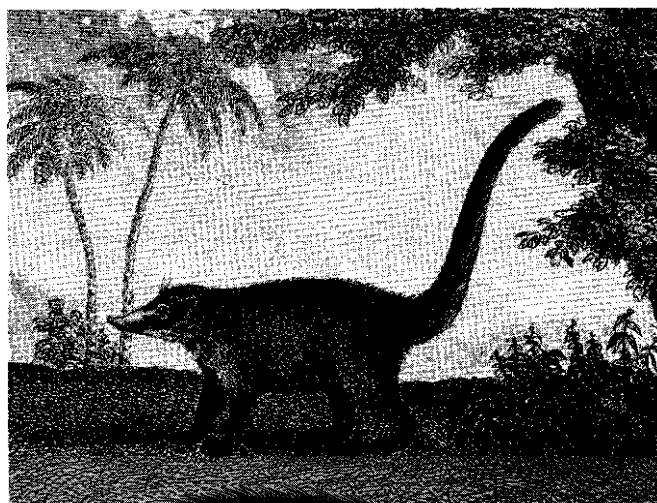
The larger tropical bats are clumsier and slower in flight (class B) compared to their smaller brothers. Only 50% of those that respond as familiars will have echolocation. If this ability is present, it sometimes involves tongue-clicking sounds, rather than squeaks. Tropical bats eat fruit and nuts. Like their smaller brethren, they can be sinfully ugly.

**CAT:** This category embraces both domestic cats and their wild cousins, ranging in size from 5 to 16 pounds. In cities and towns any cat summoned will be domestic, or at least once-domestic, as will 75% of the cats found in inhabited areas. All others summoned as familiars will be small, wild cats. Cats are found in any environment with the exception of arctic and subarctic uninhabited areas.

Wild cats are spotted or striped, or of a solid color with markings on ears and tail. They will resemble tigers, leopards, and lynxes in coloring. Cats of domestic origin will always be black, or at the option of the DM will have some unusual symbol in the pattern of their fur.

Domestic cats can only make one claw rake with their forepaws per attack, but wild cats can take a second swipe. Both gain rear claw strikes if a forepaw attack succeeds in hitting the opponent. All cats surprise their prey 4 in 6 times. They are surprised only 1 in 6 times.

Cats will eat meat of any sort, preferably fresh. Wild ones will sometimes bring down prey as large as a lamb.



*Coatis are related to raccoons. With their sensitive and flexible snouts, they can detect and root out a wide variety of foods.*

bonus. In addition, note that a bat's echolocation is directional, so it is possible to sneak up behind a bat.

Small bats are swift and agile in flight (maneuverability class A). For game purposes, all have echolocation. They will eat insects, or sometimes small frogs or fish or even smaller bats. They can be fed lean meat, preferably fresh. In cold climates small bats cannot fly very well or very far

**CIVET:** The animals in this category are tropical and subtropical carnivores that look somewhat like a cross between a cat and a weasel, with the cat predominant. They are about cat-sized, and colored much as wild cats are: with spots and stripes, or vague cloudy markings. The category includes genets, which differ from civets in that they lack scent glands and are sometimes tamed and used as mousers. In general, civets are



Fishers can swim well, and those living in areas with trees are good climbers.



quite wild and shy and will not be common near human habitations. When this result is rolled for a familiar, a genet will be summoned 100% of the time in a town or city, 50% of the time in other inhabited areas, and 10% of the time in any other area. Otherwise, the resultant familiar will be a civet.

All of these animals can climb well, though their claws are not as sharp and fully retractile as a cat's. They are less carnivorous than cats, but thrive on meat. Once a week civets (not including genets) can exude a foul musk that has the same effect on those nearby as a troglodyte's odor (see the Monster Manual).

COATI: These animals are related to raccoons, and are somewhat similar to them in appearance and behavior, though they have long, snoutlike noses and long, slender tails. They usually hold their tails straight up, perpendicular to their bodies. Coatis are native to most kinds of terrain in tropical and subtropical climates. Adults weigh as much as large cats. Coatis are more terrestrial than raccoons, and though they can manage greater bursts of speed than raccoons, they are not as good at handling objects or climbing. With their sensitive and flexible snouts, they can detect and root out a wide variety of foods.

COCK: This term identifies a male bird of the group of pheasants and pheasant-like birds that includes the common chicken. These birds are found in any temperate to tropical area that offers cover. Those summoned to be familiars will be about the size of an ordinary pheasant, and jet black. If domestic birds are summoned, they will represent one of the smaller, more agile breeds, such as the bantam. Always in towns and cities, and 50% of the time in other inhabited areas, the summoned cock familiar will be domestic.

All of these birds are class C fliers and haven't much endurance (four rounds of flight at most). They are omnivores, but greens and grains make up the bulk of their diet.

CROW: This category covers most of the medium-sized birds of the genus *Corvus*, including common crows, fish crows, carrion crows, rooks, and so on — but not ravens. Crows are found in any climate from subarctic to tropical, in all but the most barren of wastelands. They do not fear human habitations. They measure about 1½ feet from beak to tip of tailfeathers. Crows are black, sometimes with white markings. They are good mimics, and as familiars they can convey messages of three words or less, though they can in no way speak coherently or understand language

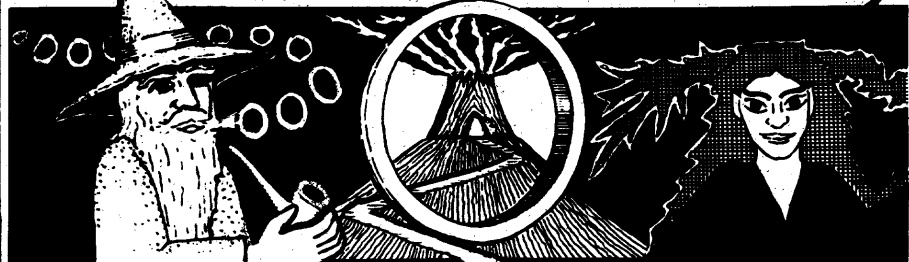
without magical aid. Crows do well on a varied diet much like that of humans, though they enjoy insects a good deal more. They are class A fliers. During daylight conditions, they are never surprised. If a crow's hit succeeds, it may (10% chance) blind the opponent's eye.

DOG: In inhabited areas, the summoned dog is one of the smaller sorts — a skinny mongrel with wary eyes, the "thievish" dog of early classifications that by its appearance supports the theory that domestic dogs carry a strain of jackal. In tropical and subtropical areas away from human habitation, the animal summoned will be a true wild dog of appropriate size. Dogs will not be found outside tropical and subtropical areas unless human dwellings are nearby.

Dogs of domestic origin will be black, pied, or brown with a yellow or reddish tint. Wild dogs will be brindled or plain in pattern. Those summoned to be familiars will be the size of a large fox or small jackal, but with more powerful jaws. In packs they can bring down deer, but these dogs take small game as a general rule. Wild or domestic, dogs will eat nearly anything, though they prefer ripe meat.

FISHER: This category encompasses all of the larger weasel-like animals, including the fisher, plus the larger martens and the mongooses. All are similar in habits and appearance, though they aren't close

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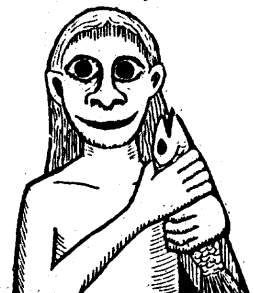
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relatives. The fisher family described here inhabits all climates but the arctic, preferring to avoid dense settlements. Mongooses are predominantly found in tropical and subtropical areas, while the others inhabit cooler climates.

All of these animals tip the scale at 2-16 pounds. They measure 2-4 feet in length. The animals can swim well, and those living in areas with trees are good climbers. All are exclusively carnivorous, unlike most animals called "carnivores." Some mongooses are exclusively diurnal, but these will not respond to the *find familiar* spell.

**FOX:** When a fox becomes a familiar, in temperate climates it is usually of the common red fox variety. Still, foxes can be found everywhere, even in the high arctic. Color of coat and shape of ears and face may vary, but all foxes weigh between 4 and 15 pounds, although their long fur and tails sometimes give them a heftier appearance.

Foxes are swift and canny in the hunt, whether the pursuer or the pursued. They have been known to outrun wolves, and few other carnivores can match their endurance. A surprisingly good climbing ability complements their speed. Foxes eat meat and insects primarily, but they will accept some vegetable matter. Like dogs, they seem to prefer a well-rotted meal.

**GULL:** Birds of this sort that respond to the *find familiar* spell are not the ordinary

beachgoers; they're black. In arctic waters, the summoned bird will be the dark, gull-like skua. Gull familiars always represent the larger birds in their family; small gulls, like those resembling terns, will not be summoned. Gull familiars have wingspans of 4 to 5½ feet, and measure 1½ to 2 feet from beak to tail. Birds matching this description exist worldwide, inhabiting areas within 50 miles of any coastline and near any large inland body of water.

Although these familiars are skilled at flying long distances over water, they are not particularly agile (class C fliers). Gulls can swim, but only on the water's surface. They eat anything from worms and turnips to carrion and snails, but their favorite entree is fish.

**HARE:** The hare, with its reputation for sly tricks, is not uncommonly thought to have magical properties. Those summoned by a magic-user are black in color, and abnormally large.

Hares are lankier and leggier than rabbits. They can muster impressive speed over short distances, and perform prodigious leaps (up to 20') at need. The animals have no effective means of attack. They can survive on nearly any sort of vegetable matter, including the juicy parts of bark and twigs. They inhabit the lands from the arctic to the tropics, but they do not live in heavy forests. Their ears are abnormally large, not for collecting sound, but for

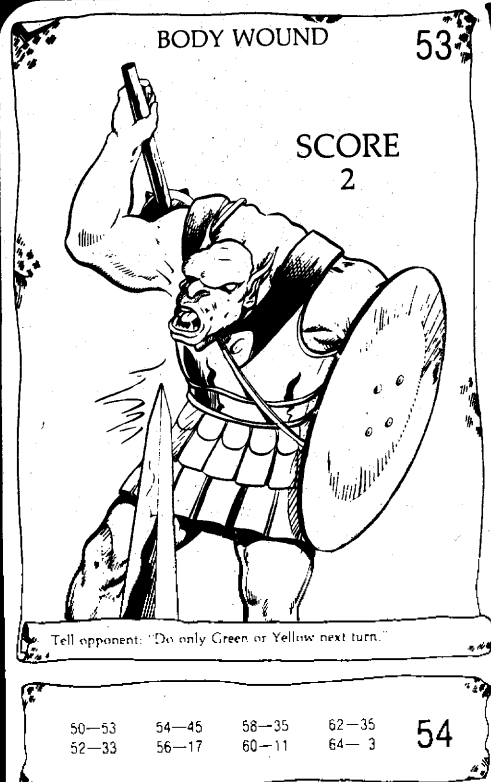
radiating body heat — a necessary function, because the animals do not sweat or pant.

**HAWK:** The hawk family, as used here, covers the daytime raptors, from large soaring hawks to comparatively puny sparrowhawks. For game purposes, the birds are classified in three groups according to size. The first class, covering the largest birds, includes the soaring hawks known as buteos or buzzards, plus the largest falcons. The second class, for midsized birds, covers falcons such as the peregrine, plus smaller buteos, and midsized accipiters such as the cooper's hawk. Larger kites also qualify for the midsized class. The third class, for the smallest birds, includes the small kites and accipiters, as well as the smallest falcons.

The hawk group's habitat covers the world over, although some restrictions apply. In subtropical and tropical areas, half of the small and midsized hawks are kites. In arctic areas, only the two larger classifications are present.

All hawks usually have gray or brown feathers combined with white. Darker markings are predominant. Kites are generally white.

Large hawks are class B fliers; midsized and small hawks are class A. When diving, all hawks are +2 to hit, and are considered charging for game purposes, thus risking a nasty death should an intended victim manage to break the bird's dive with his spearpoint. To make a dive, the hawk must



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have at least 60' of clearance above the target. If this space is available, all hawks can dive to inflict an extra point of damage with each of their talons, but they cannot strike with their beaks at the end of a dive.

To capture prey, hawks use their speed and keen sight. Their prey ranges from rabbits and pheasants to insects. If an target's eyes are unprotected, a beak attack has a 15% chance of blinding one eye. As familiars, they take meat, preferably fresh, for their ration. Hawks are never surprised.

**KINKAJOU:** These are nocturnal and arboreal animals related to the raccoon. They inhabit tropical and subtropical areas. Although they move slowly on the ground, these animals are good climbers, and they are native only to wooded areas. With their plush brown fur, nimble paws, and prehensile tails, kinkajous seem rather like monkeys. But though their hand-like paws can manipulate objects, they do not exhibit the dexterity most monkeys do. Kinkajous are omnivores. They favor fruit and insects, but familiars also like meat.

**LIZARD:** The many types of lizards that are suited for life as a familiar are divided into two categories by size: large (3-16

pounds), but all are grotesque in form. In tropical areas, half of the small lizards summoned will be abnormally large geckos — nocturnal lizards with very good night vision. Geckos can ascend or descend any surface rougher than polished glass without difficulty. In tropical forested areas, 25% of the respondents to a *find familiar* summons will be chameleons, with all the qualities of their larger brothers as described above.

humans are. Such an ability requires mental as well as physical skill, so although monkeys might learn to handle simple switches and latches, they cannot wield tools or weapons efficiently, even if an attempt is made to train them.

Monkeys that are summoned to be familiars are primarily omnivores; some of the smaller ones are insectivores. All can be fed fruit, nuts, vegetables, and some meat.



*Otters are good swimmers, and can remain underwater for up to 7 rounds.*

*The appearance of small lizards varies according to their environment, but all are grotesque in form.*



pounds) and small (2 pounds or less — still a respectable size). Large lizards are limited to tropical areas. Small lizards also inhabit subtropical climates.

Large lizards are typically long and slender, and they can move quite rapidly for a reptile. These athletic lizards can sprint at 15" for up to 2 rounds, and they swim well. This group includes the monitor lizards and those which resemble them. If they score a hit with their jaws, they can bring their claws into play, and if they consequently score a strike, they'll do a further point of damage. In forested areas, a large chameleon (though this animal is not usually considered part of the lizard group) will respond to the summoning 25% of the time. A chameleon moves no faster than 3", but in natural surroundings it can camouflage itself as well as a pseudodragon does (80% chance of success). Chameleons are good climbers, but slow at it. Large lizards vary in length from 2-4 feet, depending on build and overall weight. They take prey as small as a mouse and as large as a dove, and they will not eat carrion.

Lizards belonging to the smaller category are 1 foot or more in length; if on the shorter side, they are of great girth. Their appearance varies according to their envi-

ronment, but all are grotesque in form. Small lizards eat anything from large insects to mice. They can be fed lean meat.

**MONKEY:** The family of monkeys includes all primates of a size that's suitable for familiars. There are two categories: small, including those of squirrel-size or smaller, weighing 2 pounds or less, and large, which weigh up to 16 pounds. The sorts of monkeys that become familiars only inhabit the tropics.

Small monkeys include marmosets, squirrel monkeys, diurnal lemurs, and the like. Half of those summoned will be nocturnal, e.g. galagos, tarsiers, and small night monkeys. These animals cannot distinguish colors, but make up for it with good night vision. All small monkeys are expert climbers and leapers.

Large monkeys include some of the bigger lemurs, small langurs, and others of similar size. Capuchin monkeys, known for their work with organ-grinders, typify this group. Macaques, baboons, and gibbons are too large to serve as familiars. Of the large monkeys, 15% are nocturnal.

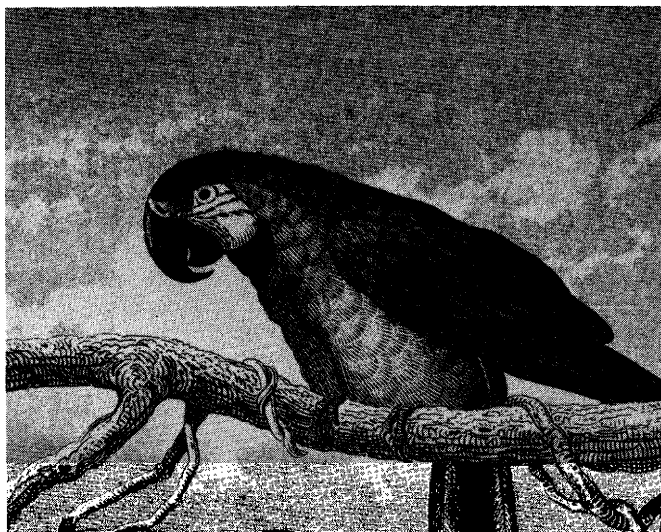
A magic-user who summons a monkey has gained an extra pair of hands — two pairs, if you count the feet. But monkeys are not as proficient at manual tasks as



*Although monkeys might learn to handle simple switches and latches, they cannot wield tools or weapons efficiently.*

**OTTER:** Otters live wherever water supports fish and crustaceans — in streams, lakes, and swamps, and at seashores. Native climates range from subarctic to tropical. Otters are good swimmers, and can remain underwater for up to 7 rounds, 5 when active. In most respects, otters resemble their close relatives, the fishers and the weasels. Any characteristics described for the fishers also apply to the otter, except for

Parrots climb well, using beak and claws. The arrangement of their toes enables them to handle objects.



manent human settlement exists there. Rat familiars are large, but they do not approach the size of the giant rats from the Monster Manual, which seem to be as large as a small to mid-sized dog (according to the damage they do).

Rats are not especially fast, but they climb and swim very well. Given time, they can gnaw through ropes, cords, and even wooden barriers. They eat virtually everything, but treat new foods with suspicion. Of these, they'll take nothing but the tiniest nibble. If afterwards they feel ill, they'll avoid anything with the same or a similar taste. The rat's famed ability to avoid poisons stems from its habits and its good sense of smell.

A rat bite has a 10% chance of infecting the victim with a serious disease, unless a save vs. poison is made.

climbing ability. (Otters can't climb.) Although otters can grow very large, otter familiars never exceed 16 pounds in weight. Otters prefer crustaceans to fish, but they do well on any meat diet.

**OWL:** For game purposes, owls fall into three size categories. The largest birds grow to the size of a great horned owl, mid-sized owls are as big as barn owls, and small owls are no larger than a screech owl. Owls live in all climates and on all sorts of terrain, except for small owls, which never inhabit the arctic.

Most owls hunt at night, but in arctic, subarctic, and open areas, 30% of the owls are diurnal. Diurnal owls possess the same sensory powers as hawks.

No owl has a good sense of smell. In fact, owls are so insensitive to odors that they will hunt skunks. In the AD&D game, not even a troglodyte's odor affects an owl.

Owls have yellow or green eyes and feathers of somber colors. Some arctic owls are an exception, having bright white feathers with black markings. Owls are class B fliers, but they are swift and especially agile, able to move in complete silence. Their feathers are soft, and can muffle the sounds of flight.

**PARROT:** A bird of this sort that serves as a familiar is neither brightly colored nor delicate. Instead, these are the more somber birds of their kind: black macaws, African gray parrots, or the kea of New Zealand, for example. They only inhabit tropical and subtropical areas. As class B fliers, parrots maneuver with fair ability, but exhibit no exceptional talent. They climb well, however, using beak and claws. The arrangement of their toes enables them to handle objects. As familiars, they can "speak" as crows do. They will eat fruit and nuts, as well as some meat. Those with a predatory tendency relish fat, and at least one parrot, the kea, is said to attack young and helpless sheep.

**RACCOON:** These animals need no introduction to those living in the Americas,



Weasels measure only 1 or 2 feet in length, but they are still renowned for their ferocity.

Owls are swift and especially agile, able to move in complete silence.



where they are found in all climates and terrains that are warmer than subarctic. Tropical raccoons look thinner than their northern kin, but the difference is mostly fur. Although these little, bear-like creatures may weigh up to 50 pounds as adults, some full-grown specimens weigh as little as 3 pounds. Those summoned to be familiars will be no heavier than 16 pounds. Raccoons are good swimmers and climbers. Their dextrous paws can handle simple latches, buttons, and handles, though not as well as a monkey's hands would. Raccoons welcome a wide range of foods, a fact of which most farmers are well aware.

**RAT:** Rats and their rat-like cousins, including a few species of opossum, live everywhere except in some areas with arctic climates; they'll even invade these if a per-

**RAVEN:** These are large members of the crow family. They can be found nearly everywhere, though they tend to avoid populated areas. They are usually gray or black, and have the same vocal talents as common crows. Ravens are largely predatory, but as omnivores, they'll eat whatever is available. Farmers commonly accuse them of harassing or killing livestock, and they are well known for following armies. (Dead soldiers make good meals.) Like crows, ravens are never surprised in lighted conditions, and a hit by a raven's beak has a 10% chance of blinding an eye.

**SKUNK:** These animals are common in temperate to tropical regions. Those that become familiars are the size of a small cat, but they have weaker jaws than a cat. Their fur is black with white markings. According to Monster Manual II, skunks can release a 1" x 1" x 1" stinking cloud of musk, which requires all victims in range to make a saving throw vs. poison. Those who succeed must retreat immediately or be considered to have failed the save. Those who fail will be nauseated for 1-4 rounds and must retreat and retch. Each must also save again vs. poison or also be blinded for 1-4 rounds. Normal clothing that contacts the musk must be burned or buried. Flesh, leather, metal, etc., must be washed repeatedly for several days to remove the stench. (Vinegar cuts the smell in 2-3 washings.) Skunks are omnivores, and particularly relish insects.

**SNAKE:** Snakes that become familiars are not the average grass snake or garter snake; they're large serpents up to five feet long. These snakes inhabit temperate to



tropical areas and are typically small boas or pythons, although large individuals of other species may be found. Snakes can maintain top speed over very difficult terrain, and they're good climbers and swimmers. None of the snake familiars are venomous, but all are predatory. They generally eat such things as rats and frogs, though as familiars they will accept raw meat. Once transformed to familiars, these snakes are immune to common clerical spells that affect their kind.

**SQUIRREL:** Squirrel familiars are large, black, and always tree-dwellers. They inhabit any area with trees. Squirrels are swift for their size and can ascend or descend rough wooden surfaces easily. They are excellent climbers and leapers. Like rats, they can gnaw through most organic materials. Squirrels eat fruit, nuts, grain, and sometimes insects.

**TOAD:** The lowly toad is found in any climate but arctic and subarctic, and it will even inhabit desert areas, though this is uncommon. Toad familiars are 6 or more inches long and almost as wide. The largest weigh a pound or more. Toads are usually covered with bumps and tubercles known as "warts," and though most have a drab appearance, some of the tropical species are colorful. Toads can hop up to 7', swim well, and remain underwater almost indefinitely if they must. They eat insects, but larger



*Snakes can maintain top speed over very difficult terrain, and they're good climbers and swimmers.*

**WEASEL:** "Weasel" is broadly used here, as was "fisher" previously. That is, several animals are grouped under this heading for game purposes. In subarctic to subtropical climates, the family includes weasels and their similar-sized kin: stoats, ferrets, polecats, mink, and all the rest. In tropical areas, the term applies to the smaller members of the mongoose clan. Members of this expanded weasel family even inhabit cities, where they may be kept as ratters. The ferret, in fact, is a domestic species. All "weasels" measure only 1 or 2 feet in length, tail included, but they are

a penchant for attacking an opponent's throat. Except as mentioned here, they resemble their larger relatives, the fishers.

#### Adding new familiars

The preceding list of familiars includes most of the world's contemporary animals that would make suitable familiars in the game. DMs may see fit to add completely imaginary creatures as well, using the animals above for comparison. Or DMs may modify the list to accommodate other environments in which AD&D characters may find themselves. For example, in the age of

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animals above would not be present, but mammals of badger size and smaller were present throughout that era. Instead of bats, there would be flying reptiles, probably adapted to daytime flight. There might also be very small animals related to the dinosaurs — bipedal, with good day vision and rapid movement (15"), able to bite for up to 1-3 points of damage depending on size.

If your adventure takes place away from the Prime Material Plane, the normal animal-like inhabitants (if any) would probably be ill-adapted to an adventurer's needs, even if they responded to a call. Natives of the elemental planes, for instance, would find conditions on the Prime Material Plane uncomfortable at best.

#### Encumbrance

Sometimes a familiar must be carried. Perhaps it is wounded or immobilized, or maybe its master simply wants to plant a rear lookout in his backpack. Whatever the reason, toting one's familiar requires knowledge of its encumbrance value.

For the sake of simplicity, all small familiars are considered to have an "encumbrance value" of 100 gp when carried, medium and large-sized familiars 200. These values increase by 50% if the animal is "dead" weight. Included in these estimates are any special arrangements made for carrying the familiar. Weasels and the like can hide under a magician's robes, but a cat is another matter. Certainly some sort

of protection will be required to carry even the most cooperative of hawks — perhaps a leather guard like falconers use.

#### Raining cats and coatis: falling damage

All of the familiars in this article are small, so they should take little damage from a fall. This is because the strength of their bones, and flesh is greater in proportion to their weight than in humans. In addition, a familiar's body has a greater surface area in proportion to its weight. Therefore, it will reach terminal velocity — the point at which air resistance prevents a further increase in falling speed — much sooner than a human body.

The upshot of all these assertions is that a rat can probably survive a fall from the roof of a house (and may even be undamaged by the experience), but a man will take damage and might not survive — and a horse would almost certainly perish. Applying these laws to the AD&D system could prove tiresome, and more complicated than it's worth. But since familiars are so important to magic-users, it's only fair to give the matter *some* consideration. Small animals should receive 0-3 points of damage (1d4 -1) from a fall of 20 feet or less and another 1-3 points (½d6, rounded down) for each additional 20 feet, up to a maximum of 6d3.

#### Intelligence and death

Little consideration has been in this article given to what an animal gains by

becoming a familiar. It's been mentioned that some become hardier in combat, but the animal may also gain intelligence. The *find familiar* spell states that animal familiars are "abnormally intelligent." Even the most abnormally intelligent toad is a dull lump compared to a mouse, so it seems fair that all normal familiars be raised to a standard level of intelligence; otherwise, it will be a great disadvantage to have certain kinds of familiars. All familiars, then, gain an intelligence rating of 4 (the highest semi-intelligent rating), plus some limited ability to plan for the future as humans do. Such intelligence will be qualitatively different from that of humans and demi-humans, however; these animals will not be able to learn speech, not as a human would understand it, anyway.

The Players Handbook states that a magic-user loses twice the number of hit points possessed by his familiar if the familiar is ever "killed." This is due to the tremendous shock caused by unnatural death — but when a familiar dies of old age, there is no penalty to the magic-user. Unfortunately for the familiar, the reverse is not true. When a magic-user dies, for whatever reason, the familiar attached to that magic-user dies, too. This explains why familiars are "absolutely faithful." Indirectly causing or allowing a master to die means suicide for a familiar; therefore, the health and well-being of a familiar's master should be the creature's utmost concern. ¶

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# The ecology of the TRAPPER



by Ed Greenwood

"Yes, I can tell ye 'bout the Crushing Death — oh, I may not look like anything much now, boy, but in my day I was a fierce and bold sword-swinger, afore that beholder took off my arm, here . . . oh, yes, big it was, and strong, and we who went up against it just as foolish and headstrong and stuck-up-nosed as you and your friends are now. . . Ah, it's gold ye have fer me? Good, good . . . a respectable sum — and fer that ye'll have a respectable tale. Listen, then — and mind ye, this is as true as I know.

"The Crushing Death in yonder hole is nothing more than a gigantic trapper — yes, I see ye've heard of *that* name. Mind ye, this one is old, and big; it's been there fer twenty winters at least now, to my certain knowledge, and a lot I've seen go and try to kill it — but I've not seen 'em come out again. But never mind that fer now. I must be earnin' me gold, so listen:

"A trapper is a thin, flattish critter, big enough to cover the floor of a good-sized roomy. Its top, the part ye'll see first, looks and feels like stone, as though lots o' flags was laid down, with little ridges and lines just like the real thing.' It's tough an' horny, not real brittle like rock, an' some — dwarves 'n' stonecutters, mostly — can tell it's not stone when they hit it or try to take out a chip.<sup>2</sup>

Under its top layer it's a soft thing, somethin' like a jelly-fish, that can change shape and slide around to fill holes and lay on top o' rough ground, bones or such, so the top of the trapper seems to be flat and

level, like the floor — until it's too late.

"Yep, they slide around, and that's how they move from place to place, but ye'll never see one move like that when it knows ye're around — they can feel when ye walk on 'em, but sometimes I think they know when ye're comin', too.<sup>3</sup> Your trapper will lay still, jus' like a part of the floor, mebbe with a special little hump in the middle that looks like a box, or somethin' else it thinks you'd like, and when ye reach fer the box, it'll close up around ye an' squeeze ye jus' like yer hand squeezes a piece o' ripe fruit. So, keep a few staves and bars in hand, or ye'll have no room to use your weapons.<sup>4</sup>

"What's that? . . . Well, I never heard o' someone findin' it in time — it can spread itself out almost as thin as parchment at the edges, so ye can't tell where the trapper stops and the real stone starts, unless ye get down an' take to chippin' an' pryin' at the edges, but then the thing'd jus' roll up around ye, an' it'd be all over . . .

"When it takes victims, the trapper crushes 'em to death, twistin' around so's they can't move an' squeezin' the breath right out of 'em. Then somehow<sup>5</sup> it gets the body an' other stuff from its topside to its underside, an' it eats what it wants an' keeps or leaves the stuff it can't eat. The thing forms its body around the stuff 'neath it, but stays flat an' hard on top, so ye can't tell the stuff is there by lookin' or walkin' across the trapper.<sup>6</sup> If ye think ye're standin' on one, an' it hasn't made a move fer ye yet, stamp down hard an' jump about — the floor won't give, but ye might hear

snappin' an' crackin' from underneath if the bones 'n' other stuff give way. Then ye better jump quick, or ye've had it!

"The trapper eats what it catches by oozin' out some kind o' burnin' fluid it makes inside itself, but this fluid only comes from the underside, so's when yer trapped at least ye don't have to worry 'bout that, too. If it gets on top o' ye, alive or dead, the fluid won't hurt right away, but don't let it in yer eyes — it can blind ye fer days if a lot gets in there. Back when I had me two good arms, I pulled a feller out from under the edge of one just in time.' He was wet, but he had his eyes closed from bein' knocked out, and the fluid didn't have time to burn 'im. Don't try to save the stuff if ye manage to get some — when the thing's dead or when the fluid's taken out of it, somethin' goes with it, and no matter how ye mix it, or what ye pay your alchemist, the killer juice is just so much sewer-water.

"I seen somethin' more, too — somethin' ye don't hardly ever see, how a trapper makes little trappers. It don't mate, it just eats an' grows an' eats an' grows till it's too big. Then it splits into a lot of little trappers — I said I seen it, and I seen it, I tell ye! — and they all go off their different ways, to find new huntin' grounds.<sup>8</sup> They kin hide, changin' color to match the ground they're on,<sup>9</sup> till they find a good place . . . so, ye won't see one just comin' down the street, but if ye go in there, over yonder, an' poke around a bit inside that cavern, ye might not find the big one ye're lookin' for — but if ye see a little one, be sharp, 'cause there's

bound to be three or four more jus' like it creepin' around hereabouts, an' not a cave or ruined hall'll be safe till they're all dead.

"Good luck to ye all — ye'll be back, soon, I think! And if ye do come back, wander in here an' tell these old ears how ye killed it — an' I'll give ye this gold right back as payment for the tale!"<sup>10</sup>

#### Notes

1. The top surface of a trapper is dense, horny (not brittle), and effectively as hard as stone. It is shaped in irregular, flagstone-like plates or lumps. The trapper absorbs heat and vibration, and thus suffers only half damage, at most, from actual fire; it won't be harmed by normal pressure from being walked upon or prodded, nor does it give appreciably underfoot. It is also resistant (half or no damage) to cold and cold-based attacks; its metabolism does not need a particular body temperature to function, and chilly underground environments are its normal habitat.

2. Small parts of a trapper's rocky surface can be chipped away without the creature being harmed noticeably (no visible wound occurs, just an apparent cavity in the rock); the stony substance grates or rings, like actual rock, when it is struck. Characters who are very familiar with stone (dwarves, gnomes, miners, stonemasons, and sculptors) can usually tell immediately that something is not right when they test the surface — by chipping or striking it, but not merely walking upon it. Characters not familiar with stone may (5% chance) sometimes realize that they have attacked something alive, but trappers are not easy to detect, even when they are being looked for.

Infravision will clearly detect the underside of a trapper if the creature is viewed from beneath (through a hole, for instance), rolled up around something, or when the underside is revealed around its edges when it moves. (When it is stationary, the hard top surface covers all of the edges.) The heat-absorbing top surface of a trapper is not revealed by infravision; it always matches the temperature of its surroundings, absorbing excess heat (or reflecting most of it, in the case of flame or extreme heat used as an attack form) and simultane-

ously transferring it, along a one-way path, to the underside. In its reaction to extreme heat or cold, the top layer acts as a barrier and a permeable membrane at the same time.

3. A trapper can sense — and, because of its high intelligence, usually interpret — even the slightest vibrations, such as a mouse running across its surface; the hard top surface transmits these vibrations to sensory organs in the actual body of the creature before the vibrations are dissipated or absorbed. The trapper is apparently not sensitive to sound waves or odors, but it can sense light up to 4" (40 feet) distant. Light-sensitive patches on the top of a trapper report the presence of light to the trapper's brain, which acts in conjunction with these patches to govern the shifts in color that a trapper's body is capable of (see note #9). The patches can detect very small amounts of light — flickering torchlight or narrow lantern beams, for example — in an area that is otherwise dark, but cannot sense the presence or location of prey by this means if the entire vicinity is illuminated, such as in daylight or when a *light* spell is in use. Also, full illumination makes it more difficult for a trapper to quickly shift color without being noticed as it moves onto new surfaces. For these reasons principally, trappers prefer to dwell in dark places, and almost always underground.

4. Iron bars or even stout staves will provide a precious few rounds of "safety" from a trapper's attack, if at least one of them is close at hand so it can be used to obstruct the creature's attempt to close around a victim (as a piece of wood might be jammed into a creature's mouth to keep it from closing its jaws). While this bar or staff is in place, the character(s) it protects can still wield weapons against the trapper. Thrusting and piercing weapons are the most useful in this case, since they are used along the axis described by the bar or staff. Weapons that slash or smash are not as effective (-2 on damage, but a minimum of 1 point of damage per hit) because the wielder doesn't have room to swing the weapon with full force. In some cases, common sense must prevail in determining whether a weapon is wholly or partially

effective; long pole arms, for instance, would probably be useless.

A bar or staff used as an obstruction (DM's decision as to what is suitable) will automatically afford one round of safety for the character(s) it is protecting. Thereafter, the object must save vs. crushing blow once per round (as "hard metal" or "thick wood," as appropriate), with a cumulative penalty of -3 per round to the die roll beginning with the second save. Thus, a staff of thick wood will "survive" for as long as five rounds before the pressure of the trapper's muscles on its ends will cause it to snap or slip out of position. (The first round of protection is "free"; thereafter, the staff must make saves of 10, 13, 16, and 19 to remain intact and in place for the next four rounds. On the following round it will need to save with a 22, which is impossible unless the save is made at a bonus.)

5. Apparently our grizzled old adventurer has never seen exactly what a trapper does with the prey it captures. When a trapper's victim is suffocated, or when the victim takes enough damage to be rendered unconscious or killed, the creature relaxes its hold on the prey and then flexes and moves in such a manner as to slide out from underneath the body. Then the creature reverses direction and moves back on top of the victim, loosely encasing it in the more pliant undersurface of its body. This underside is subject to attack by characters outside the trapper whenever the creature is wrapped



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around someone or something. However, the underside is just as hard to damage as the top side; lying just beneath the tough, leathery "skin" covering the underside is a network of strong muscles which, when they are tensed, are just as difficult to penetrate with a weapon (AC 3) as the top side is.

6. When a trapper moves on top of an object, it can use its pliancy and its amorphous nature to "flow" over and around the object, varying the thickness of its body (if desired) to keep the hard top surface even and level. The top surface will not give way under the force of foot-stomping or jumping, but in places where objects lie beneath it and relatively close to the top surface, some of the force of those blows will be transmitted through its body to the objects below, and those objects will crack or shatter if they are fragile enough. As noted by the old adventurer (and the Monster Manual), the trapper can also exercise the ability to form its body into shapes that appear to be lying on its top surface. Sometimes, the creature uses an object it is concealing as a foundation for one of these "sculptures" — for instance, using a broken pillar or a log as the basis for an extension that looks like a stone bench.

7. The trapper consumes its prey by moving on top of a victim (see note #5) and then exuding an acid-like enzyme that breaks down organic matter. The chemical reaction caused by the fluid does not begin until after a victim is exposed to it for five

rounds (which is why our hero was able to rescue someone "just in time"); then it begins to burn and corrode, doing 6 points of damage per round to any victim that is not already dead. A single man-sized creature can be entirely consumed in this manner in 2-4 turns; one L-sized creature or a small group of M-sized victims will take 6-9 turns to be consumed.

When it "eats," the trapper re-absorbs the digestive enzyme along with the substance it has acted upon, and then the nutrients and the enzyme are separated during its digestive process. The fluid finds its way back into the sacs in which it is contained, until more prey is to be consumed. The enzyme loses its potency within seconds when it is exposed to air, which is why a victim can be rescued without suffering damage from the acid, provided the chemical reaction has not already begun. The enzyme has an immediate effect only if it gets into a victim's eyes, in which case the victim (if he survives) is totally blinded for 1-4 days thereafter; a *cure blindness* or *heal* spell, or similar magic, will offset this effect.

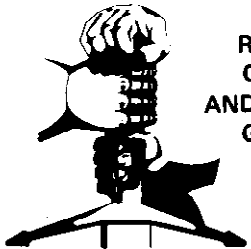
Again, note that a trapper is highly intelligent and will act accordingly — it will not attempt to "eat" anything but motionless (unconscious or dead) victims; it will not try to trap something in its top surface and consume something else beneath it at the same time, because the digestive enzyme loses its "power" when the underside is exposed to the air. The creature is never

ravenous (it can survive for days or even weeks without a single "square meal"), but neither is it ever satisfied; as soon as one meal is finished, it is ready and quite able to consume another.

8. The activities of a trapper are controlled through its network of nerves, which gather together into three or more centers or nodes. One of these, the dominant, sentient directive center, is the creature's brain. This brain is highly developed, particularly in mature trappers — able to receive and interpret sensory input, and capable of decision-making. (If a trapper senses the presence of a large party of adventurers, it can and often will choose to lie quietly to avoid the possibility of being slain, rather than attacking.) As a trapper grows larger and older, its secondary nerve centers grow and develop until they also achieve sentience — whereupon the trapper splits into three or more little trappers. These instinctively move away from each other to establish their own territories; one will not knowingly locate next to another trapper. It is not known if trappers fight over territory or prey, but they seem to avoid each other whenever possible.

9. A trapper can alter the color of its top surface (the underside is always a sickly mottled pinkish and greenish-white) by producing pigmented liquid that it stores in bag-like organs within its body and forces by muscular action to and from its "stone" surface. Unlike the digestive enzyme (see note #7), this liquid does not lose its special properties when exposed to the air, so it can be salvaged and used (see note #10). The trapper's natural, unaltered top-side color is that of its underside, only slightly more brown-grey. It can shift hues through browns (sometimes with traces of dark green) to greys, all the way to jet black — but it cannot make its top surface glossy or smooth. It can never be white, translucent, or transparent as a result of pigment shifts. Trappers can exist under water, and are known to lie inches deep in partially flooded rooms or caverns; in such cases, they are virtually impossible to detect.

10. Speaking of gold pieces, adventurers who are victorious over a trapper will be rewarded if they think to recover some of its pigmentation liquid. It will fetch a handsome price (about 6 gp per pint) in quarters where it is known as an ingredient in the making of a *robe of blending*, and as an alternative ingredient in the manufacture of various spell inks (such as that for *Bigby's crushing hand*). Any portion of trapper flesh (the underside) can be used in the making of a *rug of smothering*, *rug of welcome*, or *net of entrapment*. Some magical practitioners have claimed, in writing, that intact trapper brains (preserved in vessels of nutrient liquids) can be linked to doors, pit traps, deadfalls, treasure niches, and the like so as to control their operation, but details of such arrangements and the process of establishing them (if they do indeed exist) are unknown to most magic-users at the present time.



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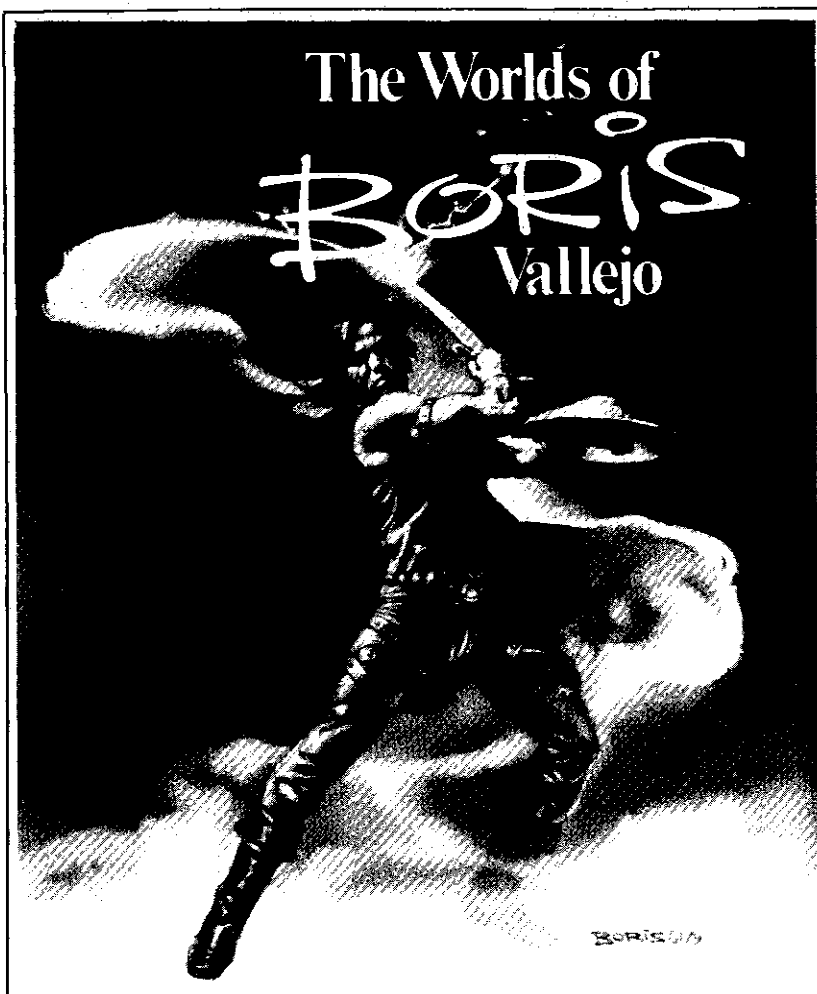
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# FIGURE FEATURE

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## BROADSWORD MINIATURES

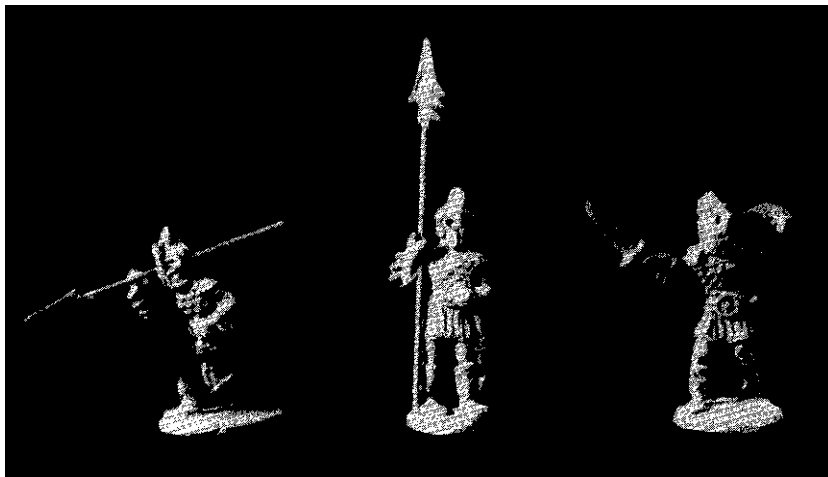
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*Atlantean Figure Line*

*Pictured: Atlantean Marines*

*Sculptor: Bob Maurus*

Every once in a while, a DM has need of an elite guard unit, a sort of special palace guard or security attachment. To this end, Broadsword has created the Atlanteans. Currently, there are 7 different assortments, such as Police on Guard, Marines attacking, Captains and Officers, etc. They range from 3 to 4 figures per set, offer lovely animation and armor detail, and come with separate spears. These miniatures are perfect for use as a Mage's guards or the local constabulary. Suggested retail price: \$3.50 to \$3.95.



## BROADSWORD MINIATURES

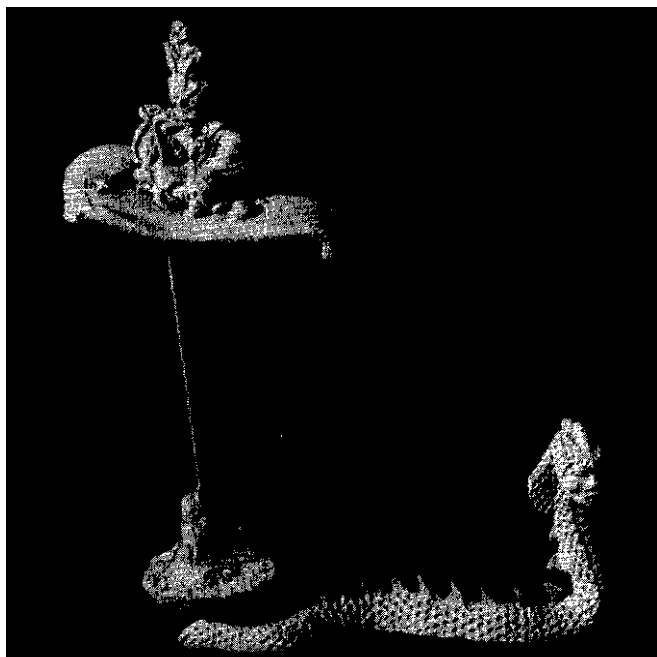
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*Personalities and Monster Figure Lines*

*Pictured: Sultan with Magic Carpet, and Naga*

*Sculptor: Bob Maurus*

Unusual magicians seem to have been popular in 1983, and Broadsword's Hookah-sucking Sultan flitting about on an enchanted throw rug seems to personify the quest for the unique mage. The detail on this figure is nice, and the figure comes in 4 pieces that are easily assembled. The serpentine Naga is a rather large specimen of the species and features a delightfully sculpted face. These are just representations of the high-quality new releases from Broadsword that should be on the "pegs" right now. Suggested retail price: Sultan \$4.50, Naga \$2.50.



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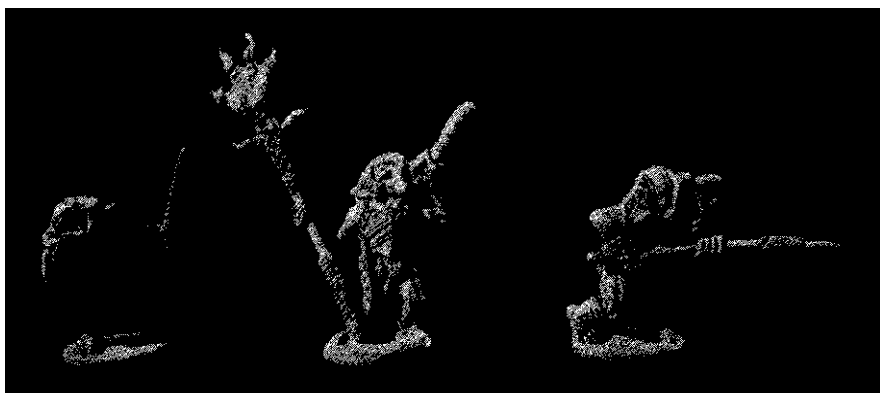
*Dragon Lords™ Figure Line*

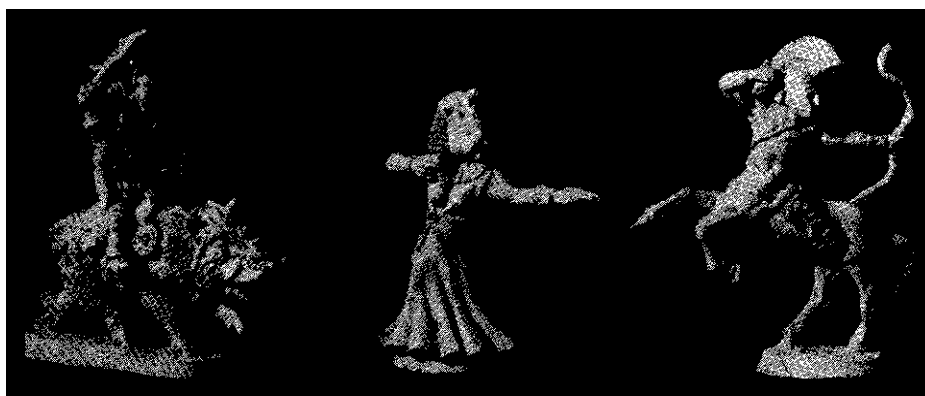
*Orcs of the Severed Hand*

*Orc Swordman, Standard Bearer, and  
Spearman*

*Sculptor: John Dennett*

After a long drought where new Orc figures seldom were seen, Grenadier has unleashed a new horde. These burly Orcs follow a big brute of a leader who has a hook on his left arm, hence the term "Orcs of the Severed Hand." All of them are superbly detailed and well animated. The set includes a Chieftain, a Shaman, 6 different Warriors, and a Standard Bearer (the last requiring assembly). This set is a must for fantasy monster lovers. Suggested retail price: \$7.00.





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*Wild Boar with Rider, Bast, Fighting Centaur with Box.*

*Sculptors: Steve Tofano, Ray Lamb*

More unusual offerings from Superior Models! The armored Boar has a Knight mounted on it and makes for a really bizarre cavalry piece (tremendous charge bonus for the Boar alone). Bast, the Egyptian Cat Goddess, is a welcome addition to the few ancient deities out on the market; her face is particularly striking. Meanwhile, the classic centaur has been given a fine animated pose and some neat additions such as the hip quiver and Grecian helmet. The theme of knights and classic monsters is extensive in most of Superior's new releases. Suggested retail price: Boar and Rider \$3.50, Bast \$4.50 for three figures, Centaur \$4.00 for a pair.

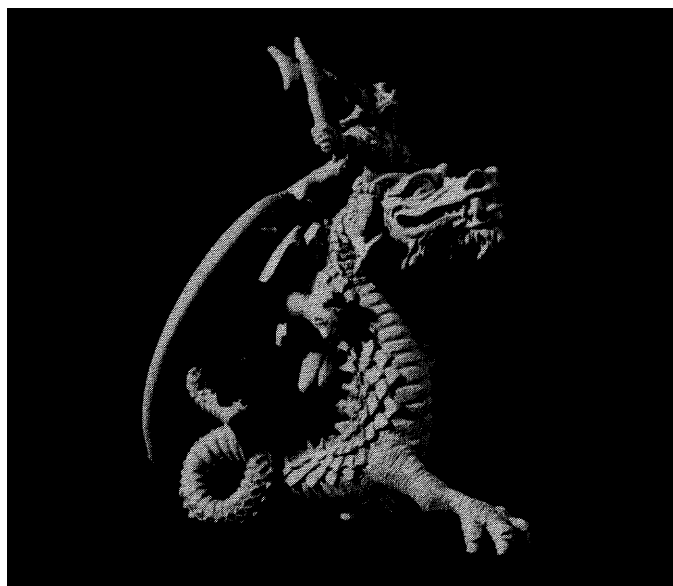
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*Dragon Warrior*

*Sculptor: Ray Lamb*

To mark their hundredth new 25mm fantasy figure, Superior decided to release a small series of dragons and riders. Number 100 is a Wizard riding Dragon, 101 is the Dragon alone, 102 is the Dragon Warrior shown above, and 103 is a Dragon Mistress atop her Dragon. The Dragon is the same in every offering. It is one of Ray Lamb's better creatures and is beautifully detailed. The riders are also great pieces and match the rest of Superior's quality. Assembly is required, as the Dragons are two-piece and the riders are separate, but the fit is exact and should offer you no trouble at all. Suggested retail price: Dragon alone \$8.00, Dragon with Rider \$9.50.



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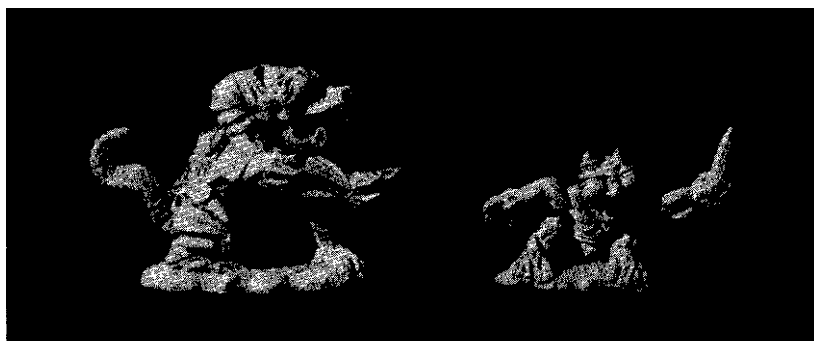
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*Space Dragon and Small Space Demon*

*Sculptor: Conan Scanland*

Saxon has been up to their ol' monstrous tricks again, this time with "space" monsters. These uglies are perfect alien denizens and could also be used as lesser demons in fantasy games. As usual their scale is impressively large and their powerful "hewn" style makes for both easy painting and creative color schemes. The larger space demon (not shown) is also noteworthy and looks like a nightmarish version of the bug-eyed monster. Suggested retail price: Dragon \$2.50, Demon \$1.98.





# Off the shelf

Books reviewed by Chris Henderson

## THE SLEEPING DRAGON

Joel Rosenberg  
Signet 0-451-12574-6 \$2.95

The current trend for a number of publishers seems to be the release of novels aimed at the science-fiction and fantasy gaming market. Of the novels written for this purpose, Joel Rosenberg's *The Sleeping Dragon* is one of the more notable attempts.

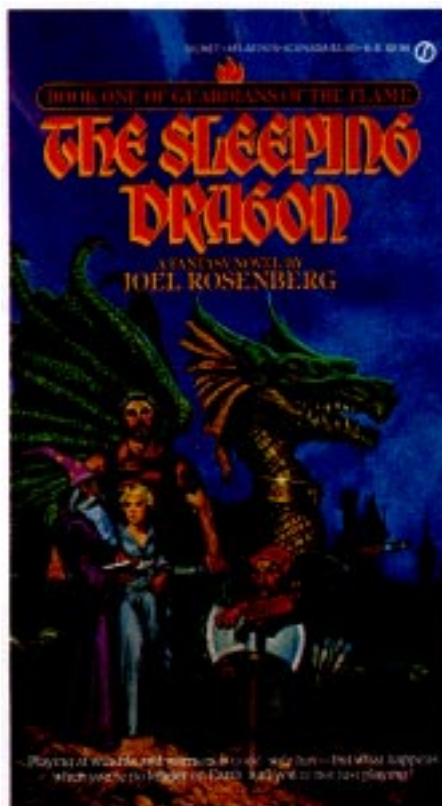
The story begins in a college student union where some gamers are trying to get together their next campaign. The game-master, a professor on campus, has promised his players something *really* special for the next adventure. The professor (who is, in fact, a magicker of great power trapped in our world) sends the players to another dimension. Here, they assume the identities of their pre-rolled characters.

Within this new dimension, the players begin experimenting with the abilities of the fantasy characters they have created. Fortunately, Rosenberg is a good game technician, so all the fantasy characters remain true to their respective character classes. Though each character experiences the same set of situations, they respond differently to these situations. This element adds realism to characterization, for no two people really react the same way to a specific event.

The novel abounds with a variety of character-class types: a warrior, a novice wizard, a dwarven warrior, a master cleric, a journeyman thief, a master thief, and a master wizard. The interaction between characters is reminiscent of many a game campaign.

However, unlike what happens in a role-playing game, the characters in this novel are threatened by dangers which are all too real for them. As they struggle to stay alive and seek a means by which to return to their own dimension, the glamor of sword-play and magical combat fades in this barbaric world in which the characters find themselves. Some of the characters die; some are assaulted; some lose their sanity. Those who survive only do so by learning to blend the abilities of their role-played characters with their own characteristics.

Using every scrap of knowledge at their disposal, the characters not only learn to protect themselves but also discover hidden truths about themselves. Herein is the truly novel part of the book. Throughout their adventures, the characters continue to converse and act like 20th-century college students. As they come to grips with this new dimension and search for a means of escape, most of the characters grow and



mature, evolving into better people than they were prior to the adventure.

With seemingly little effort, Rosenberg has taken what could have been a fairly trite idea and converted it into an exciting and innovative piece of literature. *The Sleeping Dragon* is the first volume in a projected series entitled *Guardians of the Flame*. I look forward to reading the sequels.

## THE AQUILIAD

Somtow Sucharitkul  
Pocket Books 0-671-45443-9 \$2.95

With *The Aquiliad*, Somtow Sucharitkul has written one of the best science-fiction comedies of the year. Not bothering to preach to his readers as he's done in the past, the author has created such a hysterically hostile book that one simply cannot stop reading it.

In an alternate reality, Rome has never fallen; in fact, it has conquered all of the world it could find, including America. Only one hundred years after the death of Julius Caesar, this alternate Rome has citizens who possess steam-powered cars and boats, and other technological devices. So, it is easy to see that Sucharitkul has prepared his readers to enter a rather fascinating, if not riotous, alternate reality.

America is governed by the Roman Em-

pire under the guidance of one General Titus, a fairly competent commander by Roman standards, but somewhat of a joke to the native Americans he presides over. Always ready to laugh at Titus is his constant companion, Aquila (the Eagle), an eighty-year-old Indian with more war skill and common sense than all of Rome, save for Titus. Constantly at the mercy of whichever insane emperor is in power at the time, Titus is forever being sent on one foolish, suicidal quest after another, and is always in need of his faithful Indian protector.

By the end of the novel, the pair, along with several other notable adventurers, have faced wisecracking Aztecs, wild Indians, a band of Jewish bigfeet, a brontosaurus and a tyrannosaurus rex, flying saucers, an interdimensional time thief, and an army of green pigs! Throughout all these adventures, Titus tries to placate his mad emperors, avoid his double-agent wife, master the sailing of hot-air balloons, and talk his best friend Aquila out of wanting to die whenever the weather looks appropriate for it.

Sucharitkul presses each joke for an extra pun whenever he can. He (a native of Thailand) is far more willing to make use of old jokes than an American writer would be, giving each of his jokes freshness by virtue of his audacity. It is this approach which makes *The Aquiliad* one of the wriest, funniest books to be published within the past year.

## THE WAR FOR ETERNITY

Christopher Rowley  
Del Rey 345-31052-7 \$2.95

The beginning of this novel is almost incomprehensible, with both the narrator of the story and the aliens using unrecognizable words. At first, one wonders what all this babble is about, but as the novel progresses, the plot becomes clearer.

*The War for Eternity* is a novel about space colonization, a tale in which the mighty attempt to exploit the weak. In an odd way, the novel reflects America's involvement in Vietnam and the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan. Though billed as a science-fiction novel, upon inspection the book appears to be a fantasy story.

Rowley has created a new alien race, the Fein, and an alien world, Fenrille. However, most of the story revolves around the invaders of Fenrille, from Earth, who are not described in a favorable fashion. And there's a good reason for this: The humans are attempting to exploit Fenrille, the only known planet that produces a substance capable of extending the human life span by hundreds of years.

As the novel begins, the space-faring human empire is preparing to subjugate all of Fenrille in order to obtain more of the life-prolonging drug. Made from the nests of a certain deadly insect indigenous only to Fenrille, the drug is hard to come by, since new nests are hard to coax into existence and the drug cannot be synthesized. The invaders believe that it is impossible to produce more of the drug, and Earth ships descend on Fenrille under direct orders to procure as much of the drug as possible and destroy the planet in the process. Defending the planet are the Fein warriors and human pioneers who had settled on Fenrille hundreds of years earlier.

Although many of the devices in *The War for Eternity* seem familiar — walking trees, intelligent insects, somber warriors with strong ethics — they are only superficially so. Rowley has created a new, interesting world, with equally well developed races to populate it, thereby composing one of the freshest books dealing with a new race of aliens that has appeared on the market in a long time. Though the opening chapter may seem incomprehensible, once you get past that the book is excellent reading.

### THE MAN IN THE TREE

Damon Knight

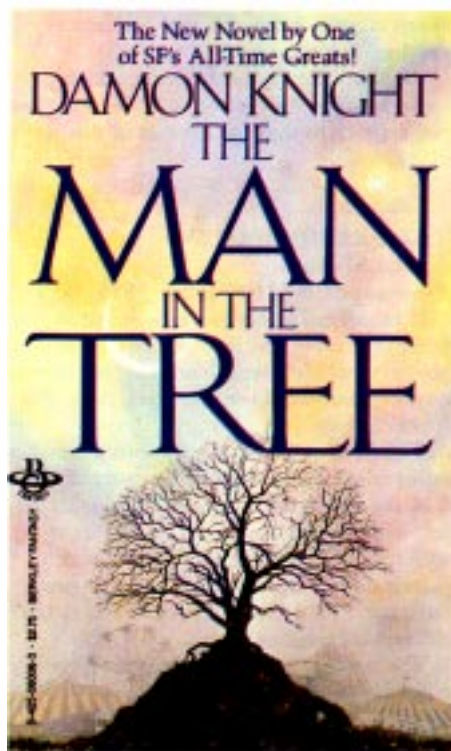
Berkley Books 0-425-06006-3 \$2.75

*The Man in the Tree* is to the recent science-fiction literary scene as *Brainstorm* is to the recent science-fiction film scene: a quiet, thought-provoking piece of work in which the impact reaches beyond the storyline. In addition, this book can be easily read and enjoyed by anyone as a “mainstream” novel.

Gene Anderson, a mutant who has the ability to transport items from other dimensions into his own, is the protagonist of *The Man in the Tree*. As the plot unravels, Anderson is equated with the Savior and his life is heralded as that of the Second Coming. Though he is reluctant to consider such possibilities, many elements of Anderson’s life mirror those of Jesus’s, but more important than the theological implications are Anderson’s views about himself, the world, and the multiple universes around him.

Unlike his peers, who must work, Anderson is able to acquire as much wealth as he needs from other dimensions. Obviously, rapid acquisition of wealth makes Anderson’s existence easier. With all the financial worries of his daily life solved, Anderson begins to contemplate problems outside his immediate sphere of influence. Given his abilities, it is not surprising that he envies means by which to solve these problems. And in his attempts to solve them, he becomes the savior he really does not want to be.

*The Man in the Tree* is a finely crafted novel, and Knight has created a slow-moving, intense fable about the myriad tangles of growing up and coming to terms with one’s personal and social responsibilities. Because of its insight, this novel is



recommended for those who seek something more than an action-packed yarn.

### ESCAPE VELOCITY

Christopher Stasheff

Ace SF 0-441-21599-8 \$2.95

Like so many authors do with multi-book sagas, Christopher Stasheff started his *Warlock* series in the middle. After writing *The Warlock in Spite of Himself* and *The Warlock Unlocked*, Stasheff has returned to an earlier point in his fictional chronology for *Escape Velocity* the first novel in the series.

Those familiar with this series will be pleased to know that *Escape Velocity* is just as funny as the previous offerings, if not more so. Stasheff seems to have gotten his tongue firmly in cheek this time, making good use of it in that position. His planets and denizens appear to be zanier with each stop the protagonists make until the story finally reaches Earth, which turns out to be the strangest place of all.

Stasheff has succeeded in creating a new humorous science-fantasy series every bit as hysterical as Keith Laumer’s *Retief* stories. And though Laumer’s strength lies in short stories, Stasheff’s comedies seem to develop much better in novel-length format. All three books in this series are excellent and can be read in any order.

### THE MIRROR OF HELEN

Richard Purtill

DAW Books 0-87997-863-5 \$2.50

Everyone knows something about the story of Helen of Troy; most know that she was the cause of the Trojan War. And most of what people remember about her comes from Homer’s epic poems. Unfortunately, Helen of Troy has been labeled as one of the

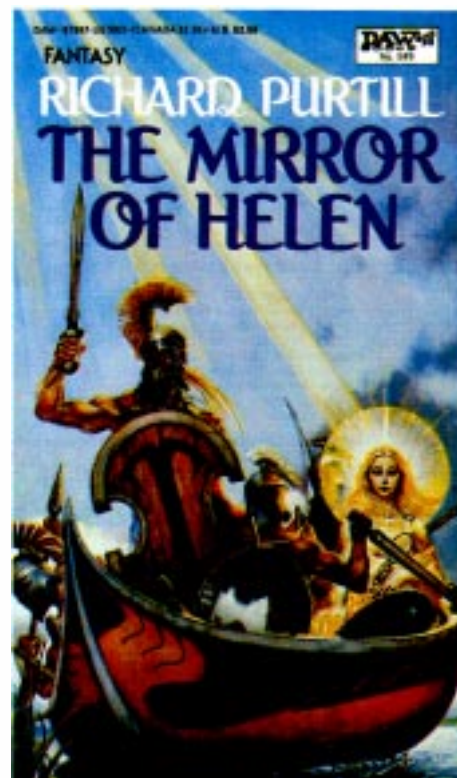
beautiful women of history, then dismissed as such. Rare is the writer who has wondered — and wandered — past the label to what Helen might have been like as a person, not as a legend.

Richard Purtill is one of those rare writers. In *The Mirror of Helen*, Purtill writes the story of Helen: her childhood, her captivity by an Athenian king, her various adventures, and her dealings and maneuverings with the goddesses. The novel is written in three parts, each one a diary kept by a different person: Alceme, the Athenian who stole her as a child and kept her captive; M’pha, a bull dancer past her prime, but important, nevertheless, to the political affairs of the Greek states; and lastly, Menelaus, her husband.

Purtill does a good job in the telling of the story. Whether writing as a man or as a woman, the author is convincing as he weaves his characters in the different social milieus. At certain moments, different characters will describe the same events or scenes, but different viewpoints cause the reader to step back in amazement, wondering how such diverse interpretations of events are possible. In this task, Purtill’s hand is a steady one; he unravels each bit of the story in its place, never rushing, never crowding.

In addition, Purtill is also clever enough to give the story a solid description of place and time without resorting to archaic language. His disdain for classical speech patterns helps the tale be easily readable.

For those readers planning a game campaign which might include Greek heroes and gods, this novel is one to buy for game assistance. Purtill understands that nobility is a thing of the soul; either you have it, or you don’t. *The Mirror of Helen* is a ton-





notch fantasy for adult readers; though sword-&-sorcery tales have their place in the literary market, so also do mature works of this nature.

#### ALANNA: THE FIRST ADVENTURE

Tamora Pierce  
Atheneum/Argo 0-689-30994-5  
\$12.95

At the other end of the fantasy spectrum is *Alanna: The First Adventure*, a surprisingly well crafted sword-&-sorcery adventure for younger readers. Though the book is filled with standard devices — the special ability to work magic, the young girl posing as a boy, the evil sorcerer — none of these devices slow or hinder the story in the slightest. With description held to a minimum, the plot advances quickly through finely paced dialogue and action.

Rarely has anyone written for the children's adventure market with the needs of young readers so firmly in mind as this first-time author does. Those in their adolescent years or beyond might consider the book a bit tame, but their younger brothers and sisters ought to be fascinated by it.

At first, many of the characters seem stock, but once the task of setting up background detail has been accomplished, the tale progresses smoothly. Though a few of the characters make only a minor appearance in the first tale, they are promised to appear in following ones. But, all in all, the

characters are believable and function as the children that they are.

*Alanna: The First Adventure* is highly recommended for the young reader who is just starting to show an interest in the fantasy genre.

#### THE DRAGON WAITING

John M. Ford  
Timescape 0-671-47552-5 \$15.95

If John Ford knew how to write adult fiction the same way Tamora Pierce knows how to write children's literature, his newest novel would have been a marvel. Alas, this is not the case.

*The Dragon Waiting* deals with an interesting idea: the retelling of the story of Richard III. Who could ask for more in the way of historical novels? Well, . . . those who read this book could. This novel demands more of its readers than an Ingmar Bergman film demands of its audience, but delivers far less.

The novel introduces its four protagonists: Hywel Peredur, a daydreamer who would become a magician; Dimitrios, a young noble who has squandered his imperial life through chance and must now become a mercenary; Cynthia Ricci, an Italian doctor of great skill and beauty who is left homeless by war; and Gregory von Bayern, a German natural scientist who has been turned into a vampire. As the novel progresses, the reader learns to respect the

four characters, feel for their unlucky lives, and wonder where their lives are taking them. Eventually, all four characters come together.

Up to this point, the book is a little quirky: it keeps jumping from one point of view to another without much transition. At first, this may be understood as a means to help speed the story along so as to get to Richard's arrival. Halfway through the novel, however, the device becomes tiring, as does the wait for Richard's appearance. Even after Richard appears, his story seems superficial in comparison to everyone else's. Richard's arrival is a mere cameo, a profile against an overwhelming background of people and details. Thus, the story collapses upon its foundation: the events in the life of Richard III are glossed over quickly, while those of the other four characters are delineated in cumbersome detail.

Ford is an extremely talented wordsmith. His problem with this novel is not *how* he tells the story, but the *story* itself. Ford's descriptions of settings and characters are marvelous, but his plot wanders and falters repeatedly. Many of his scenes are extremely convincing: action scenes thrill; terror scenes horrify; and gentle scenes tug at the heart. However, by the middle of the book, the reader begins to notice that these thrilling, horrifying, and tugging scenes just don't add up to anything significant.

#### THE WILD SHORE

Kim Stanley Robinson  
Ace SF 0-441-88870-4 \$2.95

*The Wild Shore* deals with life in America after World War III. The country was devastated by nuclear war sixty years earlier. At that time, nuclear bombs had been planted in vans located throughout the country. When the bombs were set off, the nation virtually crumpled. Unable to determine which enemy was responsible for the atrocity, the president chose not to retaliate.

At present, America is a country watched on all borders. Neighboring nations keep America guarded and contained: lasers destroy new roads or railroad tracks when they are completed, and gunboats patrol American coasts. Without nuclear power, electricity, cars, newspapers, and so forth, America has become a vast expanse of land resembling pre-industrial-revolution England, a country of pastoral peace tempered by resentment against the rest of the world.

The novel unfolds through the eyes of Henry, the young protagonist, and his friend Steve. In a way that is at times sad, at times humorous, Henry depicts the turbulence and confusion as his country enters its second American Revolution. By the end of the book, the reader gets the feeling that maybe the rest of the world joined forces to bomb America, because it was a feared superpower and threatened the safety of the rest of the world.

All in all, *The Wild Shore* is an excellent novel, especially for those readers seeking a story that offers something to contemplate. ♪



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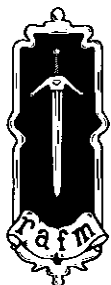
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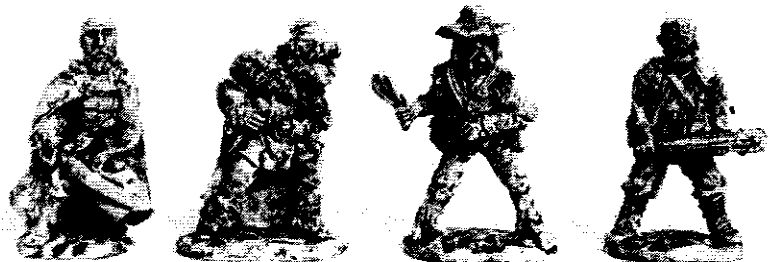
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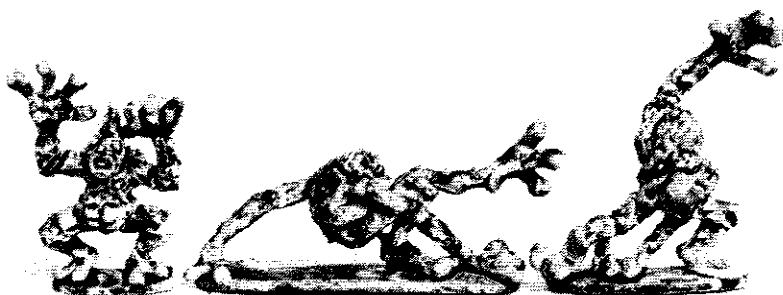
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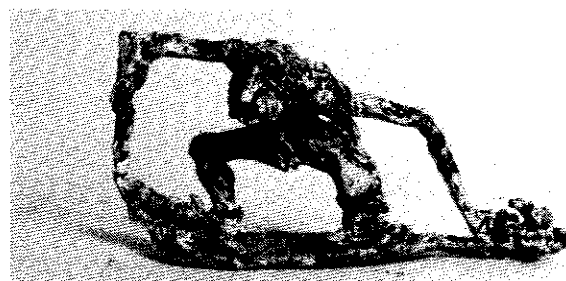


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# Never the same thing twice

Filling out facts and figures on the rakshasa family

by Scott Bennie



*The rakshasa pictured above (he's the fierce-looking one), drawn by Jim Holloway): resembles the creature described in Funk and Wagnalls Standard Dictionary of Folklore, Mythology, and Legend. This version of the rakshasa has a big belly, fingers that curve away from the palms of its hands, and claws that are said to be poisonous. And, obviously, this is a rakshasa who isn't bothering to use his illusion powers right now, preferring to let the poor victim see what he's really up against.*

Of all the monsters in the mythology of India, the rakshasas are probably the most famous. The origin of these spirit-monsters is shrouded in mystery and contradiction. One of many legends tells that rakshasas are descendants of the god Brahma (as are all evil, demon-like beings of Indian myth). Another legend says that rakshasas descended from a wife of Kashyapa, a mythic folk-being. Yet a third story offers the most popular explanation, describing rakshasas as the children of the sage Pulastya, a son of Brahma.

In Indian myth, three varieties of rakshasas visit the earth. The first is a haunting spirit that inhabits graveyards, curses weddings, and kills little children and infants. These rakshasas can enter the mouth of a human while he eats and drive him insane. In the myths, they serve as scapegoats for human maladies. In addition, they are said to have minor powers, such as the ability to animate the dead. Mustard or fire repels these rakshasas. They resemble many European folk-spirits, and are probably the earliest incarnations of rakshasas in myth.

The second variety of rakshasa is that of a monster, an adversary that a hero must overcome on the road to greatness. (The word "rakshasa" translates as the phrase "to be guarded against.") Just as a hero in Northern European myth kills a troll in his youth as a sign of his future greatness, a hero in Vedic/Indian myth will kill a rakshasa. These rakshasas do not provide the struggle that marks the pinnacle of a hero's career, but they are very dangerous foes. This second variety of rakshasa is known for its deviousness, and it is capable of assuming different forms with which to deceive its victims. The usual form is that of the creature most trusted by the victim. These are the rakshasas of the AD&D™ game world.

The third variety of rakshasa is by far the most powerful. These rakshasas are similar to the titans of Greek mythology, or the Giant Lords of Norse myth; they are the foes of the gods, capable of battling with and defeating the most powerful of deities. By far the most prominent of these rakshasa-gods is Ravanna, the villain of the Sanskrit epic the Ramayana.

Rakshasas are almost exclusively associated with evil. Whether they tend toward law or chaos, however, is subject to contradictory report. In some stories, where the sanctity of law is the dominant theme, rakshasas behave in a lawful manner, so those who disobey the law appear to be even worse than a rakshasa. In other tales, which emphasize the villainy of these spirits, rakshasas demonstrate a more chaotic nature. But even at their most perfidious, rakshasas seem to follow a lawful system of rule.

Rakshasas take on no uniform physical appearance. Legend usually describes them as deformed and monstrous-looking. Rakshasa women (called rakshasi) were considered particularly hideous, though rakshasas would undoubtedly object to this description as mere human propaganda. (Beauty, after all, is in the eye of the beholder.)

It is said that rakshasas dwell in the underworld, in a particularly gloomy and dismal place called Patalam. In the AD&D game, this would suggest Acheron as the most likely plane of origin for these creatures, and I have placed them there in my campaign. Some say rakshasas only appear at night, but it is unclear whether this restriction applies only to the first variety or to all of these beings. (*Editor's note: in AD&D game worlds, rakshasas may appear in the day or night without restriction.*)

### Ravanna, the greatest rakshasa

In Indian mythology, the most powerful of all rakshasas was Ravanna, the King of Lanka (Ceylon). Ravanna had ten heads, and in performance of the pious ritual known as *tapas*, he began sacrificing one head every thousand years. Through *tapas*, those who are worthy can gain great favors from the gods. After ten thousand years, Ravanna was about to cut off his last head when Brahma finally appeared and agreed to grant Ravanna a wish. Ravanna desired that no god or demonic being should have the capacity to harm him. Unfortunately, Brahma could not refuse to grant Ravanna's request. Brahma asked Ravanna about protection from men or beasts, but to this Ravanna replied: "Men! I don't need to perform a *tapas* to protect myself from them!" By his own words, Ravanna had sealed his doom.

Ravanna used his new invulnerability to

cause great misery. He started many wars on earth, and slew many great warriors. At every opportunity, he humiliated the gods. Finally, the deities could tolerate Ravanna's actions no longer. Vishnu, the Preserver, created several *avatars* (earthly manifestations; see the DEITIES & DEMIGODS™ Cyclopedica) of himself to battle the rakshasa-god — Ravanna's protection against harm did not extend to harm caused by these mortal representatives of the deity. The greatest of these avatars was called Rama.

Ravanna had a sister called Soorpanakha. She attempted to seduce Rama, and the angry prince mortally wounded her. Before her death, Soorpanakha returned to her brother's court and demanded that he avenge her. Ravanna did so by kidnapping Rama's beloved wife, Sita. This act incited a great war between Rama and Ravanna; their armies included many avatars of Vishnu and the finest warriors of rakshasdom. After many grim and bloody battles, Rama slew Ravanna, and the gods rejoiced. (The reader is referred to R. K. Narayan's *Gods, Demons, and Others* for a fuller account of this tale.)

In Indian mythos, Ravanna was the ideal rakshasa — the rakshasa king. All other rakshasas worshiped and obeyed him loyally as the champion of their race. In my campaign, Ravanna descended to Acheron after his Prime Material form was slain by Rama. There, Ravanna still rules — but,

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shamed by his defeat, he refuses to leave that plane.

Ravanna supports rakshasas on the Prime Material Plane through two kinds of agents: *rakshasa knights* and *rakshasa lords*. Rakshasa knights were the vanguard of Ravanna's armies during the war against Rama, and they continue to provide offensive support for rakshasa causes. The lords lead the rakshasa communities and serve as Ravanna's priests. Ravanna is accorded deity status in my campaign, but no human or other non-rakshasa may worship him.

#### RAKSHASA KNIGHT

FREQUENCY: *Very rare*  
NO. APPEARING: 1  
ARMOR CLASS: -6  
MOVE: 18"  
HIT DICE: 9 + 18  
% IN LAIR: 15%  
TREASURE TYPE: F  
NO. OF ATTACKS: 5  
DAMAGE/ATTACK: 2-7(x4)/7-16(3d4+4)  
SPECIAL ATTACKS: *See below*  
SPECIAL DEFENSES: *See below*  
MAGIC RESISTANCE: *See below*  
INTELLIGENCE: *Very*  
ALIGNMENT: *Lawful evil*  
SIZE: M  
PSIONIC ABILITY: *Nil*  
LEVEL/X.P. VALUE: VIII / 3450 + 14/h.p.

Rakshasa knights are warriors who defend the causes espoused by rakshasas. Swift and powerful, they attack 5 times per round (2 strikes with each claw, 1 bite). Like ordinary rakshasas, rakshasa knights have inherent powers of ESP and *create illusion* (the latter allows them to assume any form). In addition, rakshasa knights are (like ordinary rakshasas) not affected by spells less powerful than the 8th level. But unlike their ordinary counterparts, they cannot cast cleric or magic-user spells. A rakshasa knight cannot be hit by anything less than a +2 weapon, and a knight takes half damage from weapons below +4. A hit from a *blessed* crossbow bolt, however, will kill a rakshasa knight if the bolt was first

*blessed* by a good cleric of 5th level or higher.

Rakshasa knights despise paladins. Their deity, Ravanna, was defeated by a paladin (Rama), and they are charged to avenge this defeat. Rakshasa knights can recognize paladins on sight, and they attack at +1 to hit them, also inflicting +2 hit points damage per attack. Outside his lair, a rakshasa knight is found only in the company of a rakshasa lord; a knight within his lair is usually accompanied (90% chance) by 1-4 female rakshasas.

#### RAKSHASA LORD

FREQUENCY: *Very rare*  
NO. APPEARING: 1  
ARMOR CLASS: -5  
MOVE: 18"  
HIT DICE: 8 + 16  
% IN LAIR: 45%  
TREASURE TYPE: B,F  
NO. OF ATTACKS: 3  
DAMAGE/ATTACK: 2-5/2-5/2-7(+2)  
SPECIAL ATTACKS: *See below*  
SPECIAL DEFENSES: *See below*  
MAGIC RESISTANCE: *See below*  
INTELLIGENCE: *High*  
ALIGNMENT: *Lawful evil*  
SIZE: M  
PSIONIC ABILITY: *Nil*  
LEVEL/X.P. VALUE: VIII / 2600 + 12/h.p.

Rakshasa lords serve as priests and lead the rakshasa community on the Prime Material Plane. Like all other rakshasas, they are immune to spells below the 8th level and have the usual *create illusion* and ESP abilities. In addition, rakshasa lords have the spell capabilities of a 5th-level cleric, a 5th-level magic-user, and a 7th-level illusionist. They may generate an *improved phantasmal force* at will, once per round. A +2 weapon is required to harm a rakshasa lord; magical weapons below +4 do half damage, but a hit from a crossbow bolt that was *blessed* by a good cleric of 8th level or higher will kill a lord. A rakshasa lord, if encountered outside his lair, may be accompanied (70% chance) by 1-3 ordinary male

rakshasas, and perhaps also (55% chance) by 1 rakshasa knight. If encountered within his lair, a lord may be accompanied (80% chance) by 1-4 female rakshasas.

#### RAVANNA (King of Rakshasas) Lesser god

ARMOR CLASS: -8  
MOVE: 18" (96 " with chariot)  
HIT POINTS: 366  
NO. OF ATTACKS: 10  
DAMAGE/ATTACK: 2-20 (+12 strength bonus)  
SPECIAL ATTACKS: *See below*  
SPECIAL DEFENSES: *See below*  
MAGIC RESISTANCE: *See below*  
SIZE: *Variable, but always L*  
ALIGNMENT: *Lawful evil*  
WORSHIPERS' ALIGNMENT: *Lawful evil (rakshasas only)*  
SYMBOL: *n/a*  
PLANE: *Acheron (formerly Prime Material)*  
CLERIC/DRUID: *14th level cleric*  
FIGHTER: *25th level fighter*  
MAGIC-USER/ILLUSIONIST: *16th level magic-user/25th level illusionist*  
THIEF/ASSASSIN: *Nil*  
MONK/BARD: *Nil*  
PSIONIC ABILITY: *VI*  
Attack/Defense Modes: *Nil*  
S:24 (+6, +12) I:22 W15 D:25  
C:25 Ch:-6 (24 to rakshasas)

Ravanna, the ten-headed rakshasa king, is the quintessence of rakshasdom. He is gifted with invulnerability to gods, demons, and elementals; only non-deities from the Prime Material Plane can harm him. In battle, Ravanna wields magic javelins that each inflict 2-20 points of damage plus his strength bonus. A +3 weapon — wielded by an "eligible" adversary — is required to harm Ravanna, and any weapon below +6 only does half damage. Ravanna is immune to the special effects of a *vorpal weapon* or a *sword of sharpness*, but a magical crossbow bolt of +4 or better, if *blessed* by a High Priest of Vishnu (or any lawful good deity) and fired by a mortal being who is native to the Prime Material Plane, inflicts 1-100 hit points of damage upon the rakshasa king.

Ravanna is a master of illusionist magic (called *yama*) and can create a *spectral force* once per round at will. Only those with an intelligence of 24 or higher are automatically immune to the effects of this *spectral force*. All viewers not immune to Ravanna's illusions must save against them at -5. No magic spell below 9th level will affect Ravanna. In battle, he uses the Chariot of Pushka, which moves at 96" and allows its rider three wishes per day.

Ravanna, remembering the humiliation of his defeat by Rama, refuses to leave Acheron. Rakshasa lords are the workers of his policy on the Prime Material Plane. The goals of Ravanna and the lords are: first, to ensure that the rakshasa race thrives on the Prime Material Plane, continuing to grow

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in population and influence; second, to gain power over humans and other dominant races; and third (for the lords), to pay continued homage to Ravanna. To achieve this last goal, priests of Ravanna kidnap and slay women (symbolic of Ravanna's abduction of Sita). These kidnappings take place irregularly, but always on the night of a new moon, when rakshasas are at their most powerful. During that night, rakshasas take -1 per die of damage inflicted upon them, and the appropriately blessed crossbow bolt "only" inflicts triple damage instead of killing them. Ravanna requires his worshipers to be devious and cunning, but to act bravely in the face of battle. When he desires, Ravanna may also send rakshasas to the Astral Plane to waylay travelers there, or for other purposes known only to himself.

\* \* \*

#### AUTHOR'S NOTE

Although I was skeptical about the accuracy of the AD&D game version of rakshasas when I began my research, I soon found it is a fairly good adaptation. My only complaints are that a rakshasa's magical ability (immunity to spells) is a trifle high, and the damage per attack is too low; rakshasas were renowned as fierce and deadly warriors. To compensate for those "flaws," I created the elite rakshasa knight to give the species some firepower in battle.

Many people have another problem with the AD&D game version: Rakshasas are commonly referred to as "demons" in myth, but the Monster Manual lists their alignment as lawful evil, while demons are chaotic evil. However, this complaint is based on a fallacy. Rakshasas are considered to be one member of a class of creatures called *asuras*, a word that scholars translate as "demon." But in this case, "demon" refers to any creature from the lower (evil) planes, not just those that exhibit chaotic evil tendencies.

Perhaps the greatest misconception about rakshasas is the nature of their illusion powers. While rakshasas are indeed "masters of illusion," the area of effect that an ordinary rakshasa can alter by using

its power is strictly limited: It can change its own appearance to assume any form for as often and as long as it desires, but it cannot create a *phantasmal force* at will. This is not meant to belittle their powers; rakshasas are exceptionally good at shape-changing, and the greater the rakshasa, the greater this ability.

In closing, I must acknowledge a great debt to Dan Ziolkowski. Without his inspiration (especially regarding the rakshasa lord), I couldn't have written this article. As Dan's campaign demonstrated, rakshasas can be one of humanity's greatest adversaries in AD&D gaming.

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#### EDITOR'S NOTE

Normal rakshasas (the ones described in the Monster Manual) can cast 3rd-level magic-user spells and 1st-level cleric spells. To determine the number of spells they can carry, consider them 6th-level magic-users and 2nd-level clerics. The effect of their spells will be the same as for spells cast by a 7th-level caster, since they are 7 HD monsters. They are considered to be creatures from an outer plane, just as demons and devils are. In this article, Acheron is named as their plane of origin.

Should there be any confusion about their illusion ability, consider this: The ESP and create illusion powers of a rakshasa are inherent abilities — these creatures can do these things at will. The illusion is complete, addressing all five senses, not just vision. And the illusion only changes the appearance of the rakshasa; it does not create an image apart from the creature. Spell-casting abilities are totally separate from these inherent abilities. Rakshasas can exercise their ESP and create illusion abilities simultaneously but can do neither while casting a spell.

Other versions of the myths described in this article do exist; don't be surprised if, in a different source, you read something a little different from the stories above. As an example, see the artwork at the start of this article; it was "drawn" from a source different from the books the author used for the story.

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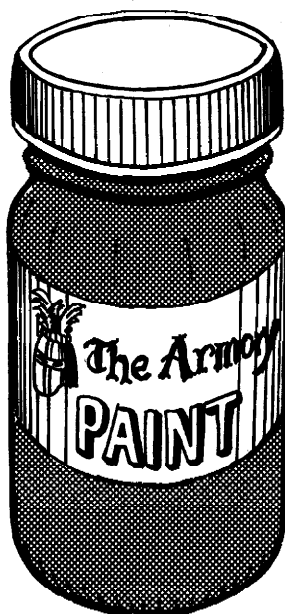
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# SF/gaming convention calendar

## **MENTORCON, April 7**

This convention will be held in the cafeteria of Mentor High School, from 9 A.M. to 5 P.M. Along with semi-open gaming, there will be demonstrations of miniatures, sports, and board and role-playing games. In addition, a D&D® miniatures painting contest will be offered, with prizes awarded to the winners. Admission is only \$0.50, and \$0.50 extra is needed for entry into the painting contest. For further information, contact: Mark Malnar at (216)255-4955.

## **FALCON III, April 7-8**

This third annual gaming convention is sponsored by the Cadet Military Science/Gaming Club and will be staged at the United States Air Force Academy in Colorado Springs, Colorado. Wargame, science-fiction, fantasy role-playing, and popular board game tournaments will be featured, including special seminars and movies. For more details, contact: Cadet Carl H. Bruning, P.O. Box 2022, USAFA CO 80841.

## **APRICON, April 7**

This convention will feature science-fiction and fantasy role-playing games, board games, and miniatures and fantasy art contents. Preregistration costs are \$4.00; registration costs at the door are \$5.00. For more information about this event, send SASE to Richard Howes, 390 North Ave., Rockland MA 02370.

## **GLENCON II, April 14**

To be held at Glenbrook South High School in Glenview, Illinois, admission to this convention is \$3.00. For more information, contact: Steven Silver, 3207 Maple Leaf, Glenview IL 60025, or call (312)564-0688.

## **UTHERCON 3, April 14**

Sponsored by the University Adventure Gaming Society, this one-day gaming convention will be held at the University of Texas in Austin, Texas. Events will include FRP tournaments, mini-campaigns, seminars, lectures, and demonstrations. A full range of role-playing, board, and strategy games will be available. Admission is \$5.00 for registration. For further details, write: David F. Nalle, 3212 Red River #109, Austin TX 78705, or call (512)477-1704.

## **NEWCON I, April 28**

The FRP Club of New Rochelle, New York is sponsoring this convention. Advanced registration is the only means of admission into the convention. The registration fee is \$8, and sign-up ends on Friday, April 13. For further details, write to: Sanjeev Khanna, 173 Mount Joy Place, New Rochelle NY 10801.

## **PURCON I, April 28**

This event will be at the SUNY Purchase campus, 20 miles out of New York City. Featured events will include a tournament dungeon and a miniatures painting contest. For information, send a S.A.S. envelope to Purcon, Box 2344 SUNY-Purchase, Purchase NY 10577, or call (914)253-5767.

## **GAME FAIRE '84, April 28-29**

This year's Game Faire will take place at Spokane Falls Community College. Inexpensive housing and breakfasts will be provided by local gamers. The school's cafeteria will be serving food, and snacks will be available at concession booths. Admission is \$5 a day or \$7 for a prepaid weekend pass; the weekend pass will cost \$9 at the door. All proceeds will go to the Spokane Guild School for handicapped children. Events include AD&D™ and RuneQuest® tournaments, miniatures painting contests, game instructions and classes, computer game competition, and fighting demonstrations by the Society for Creative Anachronism. For more information, contact: Shannon Ahern, Book and Game Company, West 621 Mallon, Spokane WA 99201, or phone (509)325-3358.

## **TREASURE CON II, April 27-29**

This convention will be held at the War Bonnet Inn in Laurel, Montana. For further information, contact: Treasure Con II/Hucksters' Room, c/o Robert L. Dalrymple, 1029 12th Ave., Laurel MT 59044, or phone (406)628-7051.

## **NIAGARA GAMEFEST & COMPUTER SHOW '84, May 4-6**

For more information about this third annual gaming event in Ontario, Canada, contact: Niagara Gamers Association, 223 St. Paul Street, St. Catharines, Ontario, Canada L2R 6V9.

## **ONOCN '84, May 4-6**

Described by the organizers as the largest SF/gaming convention in the central New York area, this event will be held at the Sheraton Inn Convention Center in Syracuse, N.Y. Guests of honor will include Frederik Pohl, L. Sprague de Camp, Randy Elliott, Carl Lundgren, and Jay Jay Klein. More information is available by sending a SASE to: OnoCon '84, P.O. Box 305, Syracuse NY 13208.

## **VIKING CON 5, May 4-6**

Sponsored by WWU's Science-Fiction and Fantasy Club, this event will be held at the Leopold Hotel. Guests of Honor will include Gordon Dickson, Alan Nourse, and Steve Leialoha. For more information, contact: VU 402, Western Washington University, Bellingham WA 98225, or call (206)676-3460.

## **LITTLE WARS, May 5-6**

This miniatures convention will include historical, fantastic, and SF events. It will be at the Willow Brook Inn at the intersection of US Hwy 14 and Hwy 53 in Palatine, Ill. Preregistration is \$5.00; prices at the door are \$6.00 for the weekend, \$4.00 for Saturday, and \$3.00 for Sunday. Contact: Todd Fisher, 6908 N. Oakley, Chicago IL 60645.

## **TEXARKON 3, May 11-13**

This science-fiction and fantasy convention will be held at the Tall Timbers Resort and Inn in Texarkana, Arkansas. Guests of honor will include Mr. and Mrs. Theodore Sturgeon, Phil Foglio, and Robert Asprin. An art show and auction, video room, D&D® game and costume contests, and a dealers' room will be featured at this event. For more information about the convention, send a self-addressed, stamped envelope to: Texarkon, 1021 East 29th, Texarkana AR 75502.

## **TRI-STATE CON 1984, May 11-13**

This gaming convention will be staged at the Cincinnati Technical College in Cincinnati, Ohio. For further details, contact: Tri-State Con '84, c/o Boardwalk, 1032 Delta Ave., Cincinnati OH 45208, or call (513)871-2110 or (513)351-9920.

## **KEYCON '84, May 18-20**

To be held at the Delta Winnipeg Hotel in Winnipeg, Manitoba, this convention will be highlighted by such events as an art show, video programs and movies, various sf/fantasy role-playing games, seminars and workshops, a masquerade ball, and a Sunday buffet. Robert Asprin will be the convention's Guest of Honor, with Phil Foglio as Artist Guest of Honor and Nick Burns as Comics Guest of Honor. Registration costs are \$15 until April 15, and \$20 at the door. For more details, write to: KEYCON '84, P.O. Box 165, Westwin P.O., Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada R2R 0Y0.

## **MARCON XIX, May 18-20**

Ohio's oldest science-fiction convention will be staged at the Quality Inn, 4900 Sinclair Road, Columbus OH 43229. This event will include computer, fantasy, and science-fiction games, folk singing, comics, videos, and a dealers' room. C.J. Cherryh will be Guest of Honor for the convention. Membership fees are \$12.50 until April 15, \$15.00 thereafter. A buffet brunch will be served on Saturday morning; cost is \$7.50. Send all registrations and communications to: MARCON XIX, P.O. Box 14078, Columbus OH 43214-0078.

## **TECHNICON, May 19-20**

This gaming convention will be held at the Squires Student Center, VPI Campus, Blacksburg, Virginia. For more information

about this convention, please contact: Phillip Morris, D-4 Sturbridge Square, Blacksburg VA 24060, or telephone (703) 951-2830.

#### **GAMEATHON 9, May 25-27**

Sponsored by the Schenectady Wargamers Association, benefits from this convention will go to the Hospice of Schenectady. Events will include FRP gaming, assorted tournaments, and an AD&D™ open tournament. For more details, send a self-addressed, stamped envelope to R. C. Jones, SWA Gameathon, 1639 Eastern Parkway, Schenectady NY 12309.

#### **MIGS V, May 27**

The Military Interests and Games Society is preparing for its fifth annual gamesfest. This will be a FREE day of wargaming, in all its myriad forms. Various wargame tournaments and events, as well as a miniatures painting competition, will take place. The event will be held at the Kitchener-Waterloo Regional Police Association Recreation Centre, R.R. 2, Cambridge, Ontario, Canada. The hall will open at 10:00 a.m. and close at 10:00 p.m. For further information about the convention, please contact: Chris Goldsmith, Secretary, 100 Lorraine Drive, Hamilton, Ontario, Canada L8T 3S3.

#### **CON-JURATION, June 1-3**

Gaming tournaments, a trivia contest, figure painting competition, films, and a

masquerade will all be part of this event. Guest of Honor will be Jack Chalker; special guests will include Edward Bryant, Glen Cook, Warren Norwood, and Mike Resnick. Lunch with the guests and a writer's workshop have also been planned. This year's convention will take place at the West World Inn in Tulsa, Oklahoma. Admission is \$8 until May 4, or \$10 at the door. For more information, write to: Con-Juration, P.O. Box 690064, Tulsa OK 74169.

#### **CAMP CON '84, June 2**

This convention will be held at Camp Emmanuel, south of Astoria, Illinois. Featured events will include a mixture of board and role-playing games. Special guests for the convention will be Terry and Carol Sager, creators of *Sovereigns of the Sea*™ game. For more information, contact: Kevin Sager, Box 833, Astoria IL 61501, or call (309) 329-2934.

#### **GAMEX 1984, June 15-17**

At this convention, the first 1,500 people who register at the door will receive a free game worth \$10. Featured gaming events will include war, fantasy, role-playing, family, sports, and computer games. Seminars, flea markets, and a special game auction will also be on the convention schedule. For more information about registration and admission prices, contact: GAMEX 1984, P.O. Box 758, Bellflower CA 90706.

#### **DESOLATION CON, June 16**

This convention will offer board and role-playing games, miniatures, costume contests, an art show, and a movie room. For more information, please send a self-addressed, stamped envelope to Desolation Con, P.O. Box 297, Richland WA 99352.

#### **ORIGINS 84, June 21-24**

This 10th annual national gaming convention will be staged at the Dallas Market Hall-North. Without exception, every major adventure gaming company will be present or represented at the show. Science-fiction and fantasy authors Robert Asprin, C. J. Cherryh, Fred Saberhagen, and Richard Pini will be present for seminars and autographs. Noted boardgame, role-playing, and computer software designers and developers will share their secrets and philosophies. Hundreds of tournaments, demonstrations, and workshops will run throughout the four days. For information, contact: Origins 84, P.O. Box 59899, Dallas TX 75229.

#### **WILCON, June 23-25**

Fifty free events will be featured throughout this convention, which will be held in Wilmington, Illinois. Memberships are \$4 per day, or \$10 for the entire weekend. For more information about this gaming convention, contact: Donald Heck, 1790 Vista Drive, Wilmington IL 60481, or phone (815) 476-7385.

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# And then there were three

## Companion takes D&D® game to even higher levels

Preview by Frank Mentzer

The idea of a “Companion Set” addition to the **DUNGEONS & DRAGONS®** rules first surfaced in 1980. It was *just* an idea, way back then. . . . Finally, in the fall of 1982, Gary Gygax gave the go-ahead to start revising the whole D&D® game system. The new Basic and Expert sets are now complete, and on the store shelves — to be followed this summer by the outgrowth of that idea from way back when, the **DUNGEONS & DRAGONS** Companion Set. This article is a preview of Book 1 of the two-volume boxed set; Book 2 will be previewed separately in a later issue of this magazine.

Before we get going, I’d like to thank Doug Niles and Garry Spiegle for their special work on this project. I know next to nothing about wargames, but I wanted to include the best system we could put together for mass battles. I wanted something that a non-wargamer like me could use easily, but that also would be acceptable to experienced miniatures players. I wanted a simple version, with options that could be added for more realism. And, I wanted it to be easy to modify; everybody applies “house rules,” or finds little things to add that weren’t covered in the original rules. I knew better than to try tackling something like this myself; I couldn’t learn all the ins and outs of wargaming in a couple of weeks, or even a couple of months. So I turned this part of the project over to Doug and Garry, after explaining what I wanted. I picked at it a bit, Carl Smith and Mark Acres helped fiddle and polish, and various TSR design staff members playtested it. The wargamers around here say that it’ll handle *anything*. Ten bugbears? Okay. Five thousand orcs? Fine. A million dwarves? No problem. Sixty red dragons, eighty-three wyverns, and seven air elementals against nine 25th-level wizards and forty-one elves riding pegasi? A piece of cake. The system is called the “War Machine,” and it’s one of the highlights of the Companion Set.

And now, without further ado . . .

### PART 1: GENERAL NOTES

Throughout the revisions of the Basic and Expert Sets, and now in creating the Companion Set, our work has been guided by three simple rules. First, the game must be *fun* — else why play it? Second, it must be *playable*. Many details of medieval times, although historically accurate, are complex and disorganized — generally all too “human” to use in a game.

Third, and perhaps most important of all, it must be *true* — true to the spirit of

the Original D&D game. That unique combination of fantasy wargaming and role-playing spawned a new *type* of game, not merely new rules — a precious thing indeed.

Few of today’s players can remember the excitement of a decade ago, when “Tactical Studies Rules” was just a new name on a new game. The imaginative and often amazing ideas in those little brown books labeled “Dungeons & Dragons” took the gaming world by surprise — and by storm. Now, this new Companion Set is larger than those original rules, and is the third of a series. Comparing these sets to the Original, one might ask why all of this is necessary — and where did all of this *come* from?

The original ideas were both simple and complex. They were simple, giving the briefest of instructions for various new concepts, but complex in their implications. To grab just one: If a cleric can create food and water, what does that do to famine . . . to siege warfare . . . indeed, to a whole fantasy world? Lacking time, space, and experience with the new game system, the original designers left much for future development — and their future has now become our present. It’s time . . . so here’s the Companion Set.

### The changing game

To see how the D&D game itself changes to suit all levels of characters, we need to think of the “long-term” game in these three sections:

Beginning and low-level characters (levels 1-6) are learning the ways of adventuring, and do not usually think about the many years ahead. Dungeon adventures are common, and a few short wilderness journeys usually occur. The characters’ homes may be “assumed” for game purposes, or perhaps they reside in a boardinghouse in their home town. Character levels 1-3 are explained in the D&D Basic Set, and levels 4-6 in the D&D Expert Set.

“Name” and mid-level characters (levels 7-14) often travel far and wide. Long journeys, deep dungeons, and special tasks are typical adventures in this range. The character builds or buys a stronghold, or takes rooms in another’s castle in exchange for services or payments. This range of characters is detailed in the D&D Expert Set.

Upper-level characters (levels 15-25) continue the exploration (or conquest!) of the world. PC rulers gain power and wealth, while travelers gather knowledge and fame. Other planes of existence are explored. By level 25, the “home base” has become either a fortified castle complex or

a secret stronghold. Epic quests and other-planar problems are typical adventures. Upper-level characters are detailed in the D&D Companion Set.

(And, for those who are wondering where things go from there, let it suffice — for now — to say that characters of levels 26-36 will be detailed in the D&D Master Set, and characters of levels beyond the 36th will be described in the final D&D game set, The Immortals.)

When you think about the game with this sort of “overview,” you can plan what your characters want from their careers. Dungeon Masters usually plan ahead; now it’s time for the players to do that, too.

### Companion-level games

So you have a 15th-level character. What are you going to do now?

From this point, your character may travel far and near, or may settle down to rule a land. Both can be exciting, adventurous, and fruitful paths to follow.

Whichever you choose, the games you play will be somewhat different than they have been. Characters in this range have many powers, and can easily handle the more “routine” monsters. Adventures become much more than simple “kill the monster, grab the treasure” affairs. Role-playing becomes more important, and more fun.

Characters become more independent. When the characters started their careers, they needed each other just to survive. But now a few trolls present nothing more than an opportunity for exercise, rather than deadly danger. Now the characters aren’t as dependent on each other; they can survive and prosper as individuals. The persons with whom a character adventures are now more important as friends, and no longer must necessarily serve as bodyguards for one another.

The campaign world plays a large part in D&D games of this range. Although a few dungeon or wilderness adventures are quite acceptable “just for fun,” consider the characters’ reasons for being: *Why* is your character a professional adventurer? Does your character have goals — power, riches, fame, knowledge? *Why* is your character venturing into deadly danger every week? What keeps him going?

### PART 2: COMBAT

#### New armor and weapons

The Companion Set introduces two new armor types — scale mail and banded mail to complete the range of possible armor

classes (9 to 3, without shield). The list of available armor now goes like this:

A C	Type	Encumbrance
7	Leather armor	200 cn
6	Scale mail	300 cn
5	Chain mail	400 cn
4	Banded mail	450 cn
3	Plate mail	500 cn
(-1)	Shield	100 cn

These new weapons are included as well: bastard sword, blackjack, blowgun, bola, heavy crossbow, net, trident, and whip. Complete details and descriptions for each are given in the set.

#### Unarmed combat

Normal armed combat procedures are used whenever a character uses an unlisted "weapon" to attack (such as, in brawls, throwing mugs, tables, and chairs; these are all unlisted weapons).

Unarmed combat is, obviously, combat without weapons (a fist is not considered a weapon). It is usable by all character classes. The attacker either strikes an opponent (with a fist, kick, etc.), or tries to grab an opponent (or jump on, tackle, etc.). Thus, two systems are used; one for "Striking," including all unarmed blows, and one for "Wrestling," for all other forms of unarmed combat.

*Striking:* Although any creature may attempt to strike an opponent, few can do it well. A strike can normally result in either a stun or a knockout. Some adjustments

apply for size differences, and certain creatures are immune to some or all of the effects (such as those damaged only by magic or silver weapons, non-corporeal and goopy critters, and so forth).

To make a strike, a standard hit roll is used. The base damage is zero, plus strength bonus (if any). The victim hit must check for stun, and must also make a saving throw or suffer a brief knockout.

*Wrestling:* Nearly anyone can wrestle. As with striking, certain creatures are immune to the effects (notably non-corporeal and goopy critters). A new game mechanic is introduced — the "Wrestling Rating" (WR), calculated as follows for characters: Divide the character's level by 2, rounding up; apply all bonuses and/or penalties for high or low strength and dexterity scores; and add the character's armor class, not counting magic or dexterity adjustments.

When two combatants engage each other and at least one of them is unarmed and wants to wrestle, each opponent rolls 1d20 and adds his WR to the roll. The opponent with the higher number has gained the advantage, and either grabs the other combatant (if unarmed) or attacks normally (if armed). If two unarmed opponents are involved, one of them must win three consecutive wrestling rolls — getting a grab, then a fall, then a pin — before the opponent is helpless. Other possibilities abound, of course; the rules in the Companion set cover these.

Various simple and logical adjustments can be applied to all of this, and the situation is a bit more complicated for several opponents of various sizes, some armed. Once a victim is pinned, the attacker can try to inflict damage, if desired, but the victim gets a saving throw, and may break the pin.

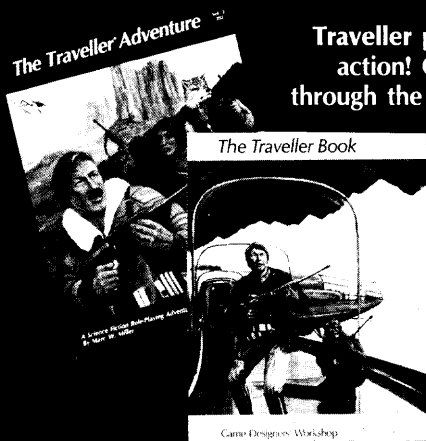
By using unarmed combat rules, characters are free to perform acts of heroic fantasy — wrestling huge opponents to the ground, or escaping from imprisonment when no weapons are available. Unarmed combat is actually the most common of all forms of combat, and can now be used as often as desired.

These systems may be applied to any unarmed attack. A giant may attempt to kick a halfling; a character may attempt to use a shield to "bash" an opponent. (Both are treated as strikes.) If a purple worm attacks a town, the guards may all try to pile onto the creature, rather than risking normal combat and being swallowed (though dozens of guards would be needed to stop the monster in this way).

The DM and players should try the systems and decide whether to use them. However, if the DM does not allow unarmed combat, the DM must also decide what to do when characters attempt something of this sort. For example, if a party member is enchanted in some way and attacks other characters, the others will probably want to stop the victim without inflicting damage.

## Put yourself in the story!

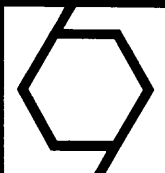
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This is quite reasonable, but only an unarmed combat system (or magic) can handle the resulting situation.

### PART 3: STRONGHOLDS

Part of Book 1 (also known as the Players' Companion) is used to explain the typical staff in a castle or stronghold. Some typical servitors (servants) are: armorer, barber, carpenter, cellarman (wine steward), cook, dairyman, falconer, forester, gardener, groom, kennelman, miller, portalman, potter, poultryman, stonemason, and weaver. Many peasants are also needed to work the fields, perform menial tasks, and handle other routine jobs.

Most rulers have advisors to handle the many details of the dominion and stronghold, and to advise the ruler as needed. The most common advisors are the artilleryist, castellan, chaplain, engineer, guard captain, herald, magist, chief magistrate, reeve, sage, seneschal, and steward. Other officials may be needed for the proper handling of a stronghold or dominion, including a bailiff, chamberlain, equerry, magistrates, marshalls, provosts, sheriffs, and wardens.

When a ruler is the liege of another ruler (a Count or a higher rank), the lesser ruler may send his children to the liege as servants and for training. A squire is the son of a noble, acting as a servant while being trained as a fighter. A lady-in-waiting is the daughter of a noble, acting as a servant while being trained in housekeeping by the matron of the household, and in search of a husband at the same time.

### PART 4: CHARACTER CLASSES

Each character class description gives the usual information on hit rolls, saving throws, new spells, XP needed per level, and so forth, for levels 15-25. In addition, the Companion Set covers each character class in more detail, offering extensions of the rules found in the Basic and Expert Sets.

#### Clerics

The "Turn Undead" chart in the Companion Set includes six new categories of monsters: the Phantom, Haunt, and Spirit, which are described in the set, and the Nightshade, Lich, and Special undead, which will be fully described in the forthcoming D&D Master Set.

The Companion Set also features details for wandering and land-owning clerics, and a new option for members of this class: the *Druid*. A neutral cleric may, if desired, choose to live and travel in the wilderness, becoming familiar with nature and the ways of the woods. The cleric must find and live in a woodland home, meditating for 1-4 months. During that time, the cleric is found, tested, and taught by a higher-level druid (usually 25th level or greater), and then (if all goes well) joins the realm of the druids.

A druid is pure neutral, never lawful or chaotic. The druid's way of life is devoted to the balance of all things, and the study of

nature. Any change of alignment results in the loss of all druid benefits until neutral alignment is restored.

The main differences between a druid and a normal cleric are that (1) the druid cannot cast any spell that affects good or evil; (2) new druid-only spells may be cast, in addition to most of the usual ones; (3) the druid must live in a woodland home; (4) the druid may not wear or use metal items of any sort; and (5) there are a limited number of high-level druids, and a duel with one of them must be fought at some point, using unarmed combat, if the character is to progress any further in experience levels.

#### Fighters

A lawful wandering fighter may be known as a *Paladin* if certain requirements are met. First, the fighter must swear fealty (allegiance) to a lawful church to gain paladin status, and may thereafter be summoned by the church leaders at any time. Once the title is gained, a paladin can *detect evil* at a range of up to 120' once per round; can turn undead as a cleric of one-third the paladin's level; and, if the paladin's wisdom score is 13 or higher, he can cast cleric spells, again as a cleric of one-third the paladin's level. A paladin may only travel with a limited number of hirelings, and must assist anyone (except evil creatures) that asks for help. "Assistance" never involves donations of money or items, but only service for a short time.

A neutral wandering fighter may become a *Knight*. The fighter must swear fealty to royalty (a prince, king, or emperor); in return, the ruler will declare the character a knight. That ruler then becomes the knight's "liege." Lawful and chaotic fighters may become knights if they do not become paladins or avengers (see below), whether this is by choice or by failure to meet the requirements for those two categories. If summoned by his liege, the knight must obey as quickly as possible. If the knight ever refuses (or swears fealty to another liege), very severe penalties are applied. A knight may visit any castle, of any territory, and demand *sanctuary*; the castle owner must then give the knight a place to stay for up to 3 days, along with food and drink. Finally, if a *call to arms* sounds, the knight is required (in most cases) to immediately travel to the ruling castle of the territory, and serve as ordered by the ruler.

A chaotic wandering fighter may become an *Avenger* if certain requirements are met. To become an avenger, the fighter must make an alliance with a chaotic church. (This is not a swearing of fealty, but a loose agreement of loyalty and support.) The avenger may be summoned by the church leaders at any time. An avenger can *detect evil* and cast cleric spells as a paladin does (see above). An avenger can turn undead in the same manner, but may choose to control them instead of gaining the usual result. Though an avenger cannot have human or demi-human hirelings, the character may try to recruit a chaotic monster; if this

attempt is successful, the creature will follow and obey the avenger. Finally, the avenger may demand *sanctuary* from any chaotic ruler, and may get *sanctuary* from others by pretending to be a knight.

Some new combat options are made available to fighters of all types, and to demi-humans as well — if they learn them from human fighters. These are: *multiple attacks*, possible whenever an attacker's adjusted hit roll is 2 or less against a given opponent; *smashing*, where the attacker accepts a penalty to hit, but if the attack succeeds he can add his entire strength score as a damage bonus; *parrying*, which affords a defender extra protection (attacks are -4 to hit) against most attack forms; and *disarming*, an "attack" that does no damage but forces the defender to "check against dexterity" or drop his weapon.

#### Magic-users

A land-owning magic-user may build or seize a tower, with interesting results. A dungeon may be built beneath or near it. The dungeon is most often constructed by specialists in mining who are hired by the magic-user, but it can be created magically if the proper spells are known and used. When one or more levels of the dungeon are completed and thereafter left open, monsters will start moving in to live there. Shortly thereafter, low-level adventurers will start arriving to seek their fortunes. Most magic-users with dungeons visit them once each month (or more often), gathering any magical treasures that remain. If too much treasure is taken from the creatures, they will probably move out soon thereafter. Occasionally, if this is done quietly and secretly, the magic-user may take some of the monsters for use in magical research and potion making. This must be done carefully, lest the remaining monsters be scared away.

A land-owning magic-user may wish to become a *Magist*. This is a powerful position in any castle or stronghold. The magist advises the ruler in matters involving magic, and handles the magical needs of the ruler and the stronghold. A magist may go on normal adventures if the ruler gives permission. The ruler knows that a more experienced magist is a more powerful magist, and will usually give this permission if the magist's services are not urgently needed at present.

*Spell note:* The maximum damage produced by any single spell — including *fire ball*, *lightning bolt*, and *delayed blast fire ball* — is 20 dice, of the type specified (usually d6). This is very important for game balance, and should not be disregarded. For example, without this limit, a high-level magic-user could instantly slay any other magic-user by surprise, regardless of the results of the saving throw!

#### Thieves

A thief who wishes to settle down must contact the Thieves' Guild. The guild will help establish the thief as a guildmaster for



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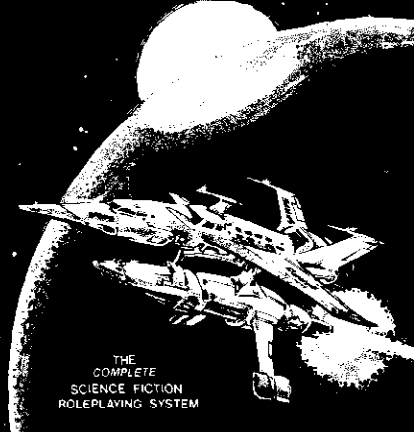
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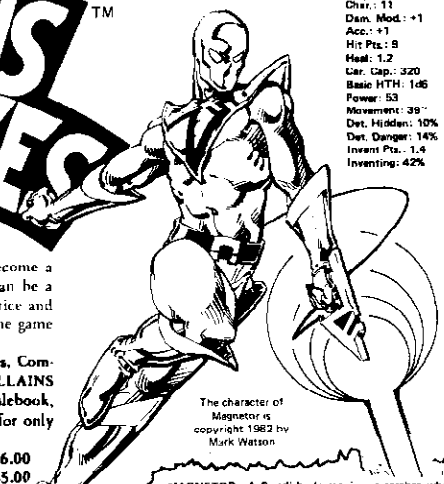
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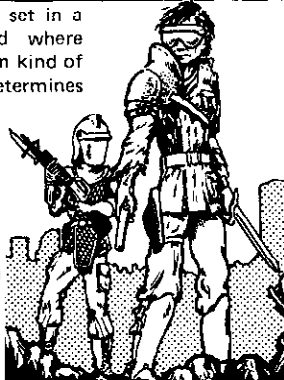


The character of Magnetor is copyright 1982 by Mark Watson

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Identity: Bjorn Gustavson Age: 20  
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a new branch of the guild (perhaps in a faraway town where no guild currently exists), or may send the thief to an existing guild to fill a vacancy. Income will be gained from the activities of the guild members. The character can, at some point, ask for control of a larger branch of the guild (and this is recommended when the character reaches 18th level), and may eventually become a powerful official in the guild headquarters.

Skilled (high-level) thieves are always needed for difficult and unusual adventures, and the guildmaster thief is the person contacted by adventurers when such jobs are available. The guildmaster thief may choose to take the job, or may allow one or more of the guild members to have it, but the guildmaster gets first choice in any case.

A wandering thief is known as a Rogue. A rogue must remain a member of the Thieves' Guild, though he need only visit the guild headquarters once a year. A rogue can never become guildmaster of an existing guild (though a new branch may be started with this goal in mind). However, a rogue may visit existing guildmasters and obtain local information, tips, and rumors.

#### Demi-humans

All demi-human adventurers are very limited in levels of experience and hit points. Elves are simply incapable of learning the arts of powerful magic (spells of higher than 5th level), and no demi-human

can match a human's "staying power," as indicated by hit points.

Though their history is long, demi-humans have never developed the art of combat to a high degree. However, humans did concentrate their talents in this area. In locales where demi-humans and humans interact, experienced demi-humans can learn additional fighting skills from their human friends. Thus, the player of a demi-human character should keep track of experience points earned after the character's maximum level is reached; as this figure increases, combat ability improves accordingly (as given in each class description).

Each demi-human clan has a sacred item, called a Relic, which is kept in the center of the clan stronghold. The relic is tended by a keeper and 2-8 aides. A Forge of Power rests at the heart of every dwarven clan; it may be used to create a dwarven lens and the extremely rare *oil of darkness*. A Tree of Life stands at the center of every elven clan; it may be used to create an elven *lightship* and *oil of sunlight*. A Crucible of Blackflame rests at the heart of every halfling clan. Blackflame acts as the reverse of normal flame; it burns cold and dark, igniting things that normal flame does not burn, able to burn ashes and leave behind whole items. The Crucible, a pyramid-shaped wooden container, may be used (along with the Blackflame itself) to create a *web of shadows* and the extremely rare *oil of moonlight*.

The position of keeper is hereditary; each keeper passes the secret knowledge of the tending and use of the relic to his or her son or daughter, *never* writing down any details, lest they be stolen. This secret knowledge includes how to construct a special item, as given in each class description.

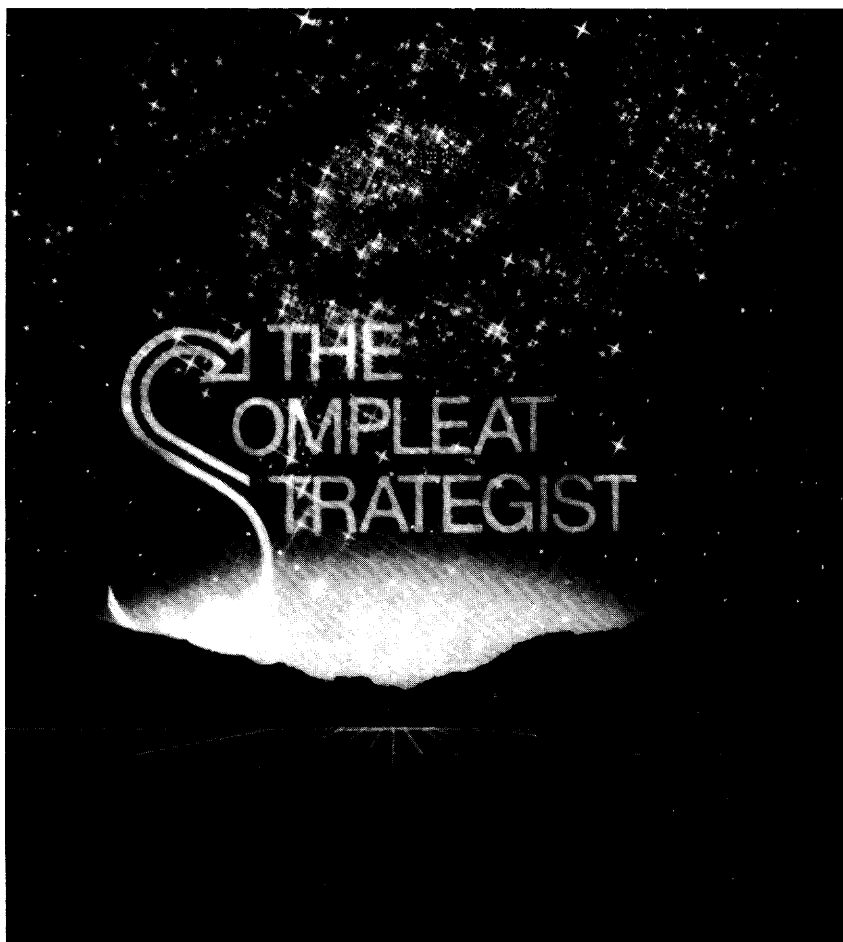
A demi-human character gains resistance to some special attack forms when the character acquires a certain number of experience points. When this resistance is gained, the demi-human automatically takes half damage from the attack given; a successful saving throw (of the type applicable) drops that to one-quarter damage.

With these rules in use, experienced demi-humans can often hold their own when adventuring with humans. Though their hit points are fewer, their special abilities, resistances, and competitive combat ability allows them to survive and compete.

#### Summary

The D&D Companion Set contains lots more information on the above topics. And this is only a summary of Book 1, the Players' Companion. Book 2, for Dungeon Masters, has the "War Machine" mass combat system, new treasures, detailed campaign information, notes on the elemental planes, and (of course) new monsters — including the new undead, and dragons that can eat 15th level characters for breakfast. Watch for the second preview article for details.

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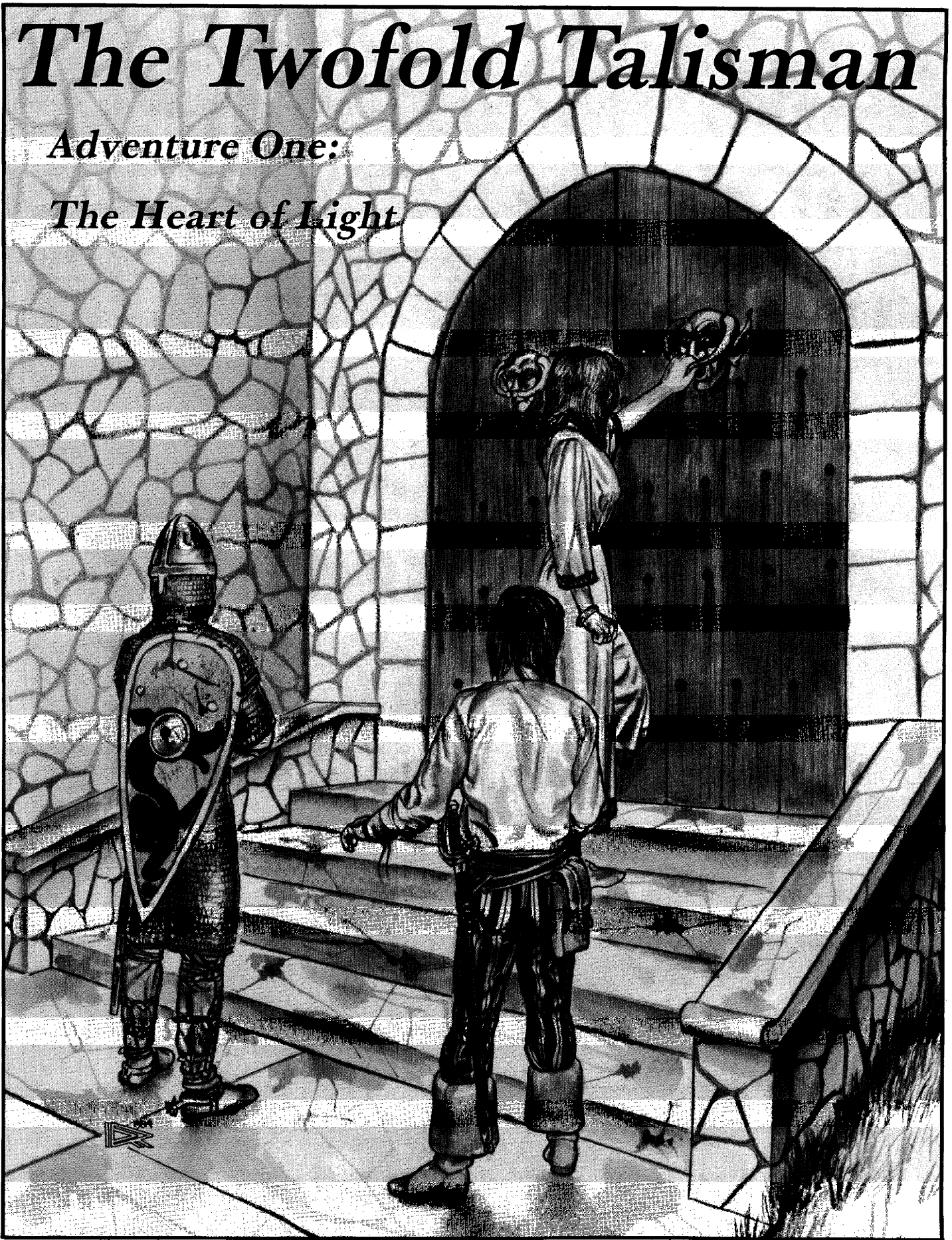
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# *The Twofold Talisman*

*Adventure One:*

*The Heart of Light*



*A tournament adventure for the AD&D™ game*



# The Twofold Talisman

by Roger Moore, Philip Taterczynski, Douglas Niles, & Georgia Moore

*The Twofold Talisman* is an RPGA™ tournament module for the AD&D™ game. It is played in two parts. Players must complete each adventure in four hours (real time), using the eight pregenerated characters provided with this text. During the adventures, players may only consult the Players Handbook; tournament rules permit no other references. Optionally, Dungeon Masters may adapt these scenarios into their campaigns with little trouble

and play them without time restrictions.

Each of the two adventures stands alone, yet they both concern the same quest: to restore the gems of the Twofold Talisman. In each adventure, characters must recover a magical gem; when they escape with the gem from each separate adventure setting, they have completed that part of the quest successfully. The first adventure, *The Heart of Light*, is presented here. The second half of the quest, *The Ebon Stone*, will appear

in the next issue of DRAGON® Magazine.

The performance of player-character parties in tournament play is evaluated according to the standard RPGA network scoring system, a summary of which is printed on page 54. *The Twofold Talisman* was run at the GEN CON® XVI Game Convention in August 1983. The comments and suggestions made by the DMs and players involved at the convention are gratefully acknowledged.

## Adventure One: The Heart of Light

### Players' introduction

The travels of your party have brought you to Jalkive, the capital city of a small kingdom. The eight members of your party are close companions; you trust and rely on each other completely. In Jalkive, you plan to take a break from the rigors of adventure and spend some of the wealth you have gathered. Entertainment is plentiful here — for those who can afford it. The local citizenry, however, has little wealth; the residents of Jalkive live in poverty under the rule of the city's powerful guildmasters.

While you relax at a local inn, chuckling with your companions over great exploits past, a hooded stranger slips quietly into a chair at your table. "I must speak with you," he whispers, "on a matter of gravest urgency. I am the servant of the wizard Mekkari, and I, contact you on his behalf — for the good of the city of Jalkive.

"You must know that the guildmasters exert great power here. They tax us outrageously, and only those accepted by the guilds can hope to attain wealth or power. My master Mekkari is a powerful magician who rebelled against the guildmasters. For this, they banished him from the kingdom and confiscated his belongings.

"Some of his possessions were special indeed. My master owned two gems of extraordinary power, the Heart of Light and the Ebon Stone. People say that these talismans maintain the balance of good and evil in Jalkive. I cannot say whether this is true, but I do know that with the gems, my master may be able to undo the guildmasters' power.

"The unfortunate thing is that Mekkari does not have either of these stones now. For all his good qualities, he is more than a little forgetful. Although he knows the Heart of Light is hidden in his country mansion, he has forgotten where he put it. The guildmasters don't know about the failure of his memory, and they have set guardians before the estate to prevent him from returning, but have not ordered their

soldiers to enter his home for fear of the traps and guards within. As for the Ebon Stone, the guildmasters have seized that gem and carried it away.

"Mekkari has authorized me to assemble a group of stalwart souls who would attempt to enter his mansion and recapture the Heart of Light for him. In the name of Mekkari, will you help us?"

The stranger tells the truth; of that, you are sure. Whether for a possible reward, for the lure of adventure, or simply to assist someone in need, you decide to undertake the mission.

### DM's introduction

The servant gives the adventurers two drawings. The first portrays a white gem of tremendous brightness; the second shows a deep black stone that suggests mystery and danger. Players do not need actual drawings of the gems, but characters who have viewed the drawings will recognize the real Heart of Light and Ebon Stone when they see them.

The servant also gives the party directions to Mekkari's mansion, located in the hills several miles from Jalkive. If this module is played as part of a campaign, the adventure may end at the conclusion of the quest or may be continued in any manner the referee sees fit. In tournament play, the first adventure ends when four hours (real time) have passed, or when the characters escape from the mansion and think they have obtained the Heart of Light.

The servant doesn't know how, or whether, Mekkari may reward the adventurers for the quest, but in response to a question on this topic, he will say that his master is generous to those who serve him well. He asks the player characters to leave at dawn the next day. The DM may invent an appropriate reward if using this adventure in a regular campaign, and may invent his own NPC version of the wizard Mekkari, if desired. The servant is a 0-level human, AC 10, with 4 HP.

The DM should distribute character information to the players before the Players' Introduction is read to them; players should make spell selections for their characters, using the lists of available spells at the end of the module, after the introduction is finished. The character information sheets list the equipment the characters carry; nothing more may be added before the adventure begins. The spell lists contain those spells available to the magic-users, clerics, and the illusionist; no other spells may be substituted in tournament play. In a campaign setting, spell-casting characters should select and obtain their spells for the day before the adventure begins.

The players should be told that the saving throws on their characters' sheets reflect *all* bonuses for constitution and magic items. However, the "to hit" information shows only the characters' base scores; bonuses for strength and magic must be added when appropriate.

### The approach

The following text should be read aloud to the players to start the adventure:

"When the sun rises, the gates of Jalkive already lie far behind you. Ahead, the wide main road curves gently through lightly wooded hills. A few miles from the city, a narrow lane branches off from the main road; you follow it, leaving the merchants and other travelers behind. The lane, poorly maintained, twists steeply upward through the woods. No other travelers come into view. The lane narrows even more as it continues to wind sharply upward. Then, a large house suddenly looms into view as the party rounds a sharp corner in the path. A 10-foot-high wall is visible about 100 feet away, and from what you can see the wall is still quite a distance from the mansion itself."

Players may now decide to either have their characters: 1) leave the path and scout around or 2) follow the path toward the wall.

### Scouting around

If they scout around, characters will discover that the 10' wall completely encircles the mansion, except for where a large front gate is set into the stone, at the point where the path intersects with the wall. Thieves can attempt to climb the outer wall, and when they make it up to the 2-foot-wide top edge, they can help others up with a rope. When the characters get to the top edge, the DM should provide players with a hand-drawn sketch similar to the cross-section diagram reproduced here, depicting a rough-textured slope on the inside of the wall that extends down into an empty moat. This sketch should not be identical to the diagram printed on this page, because that would give away the illusionary aspects of the sloping wall and the moat.

From the vantage point on the top of the wall, the characters look down upon a complex illusion. The rough wall is actually smooth, as indicated by the gray area on the diagram, and water and fish fill the moat to a depth of 10 feet. If characters touch the rough wall, it will feel smooth; the illusion is not removed by physical contact. Only *dispel illusion* or *dispel magic* will make the wall appear as it actually is (if the *dispel* is successfully cast against 14th-level magic). A *dispel magic* cast upon the ditch will reveal the water, but the fish will remain hidden beneath its murky surface. *Detect illusion* will show what appears to be an empty ditch with a very smooth slope dropping into it from the wall. (In tournament play, all *dispel magic* will be successful automatically.)

The fish are quippers (AC 8; MV 9"; HD 1/2; HP 1; D/Att 1-2). Whenever a character slays a quipper, another quipper comes to take its place. The DM doesn't

have to keep track of the fish, since hundreds live in the moat, and hundreds will still be there to attack no matter how many the characters kill.

The sharply sloping inner wall is completely frictionless. Unless descending characters hang onto a rope or somehow secure themselves, they will slide down into the water as soon as they move out onto the sloping surface. After a character lands in the water, 1-20 quippers will attack that individual in the next round. If any quipper attacks successfully in the first round, a full 20 quippers will attack in the following round, biting twice each round. If all the quippers attacking in the first round fail to hit, it is only 40% likely that they will attack the same character again on the next round.

If a character wears leather or magical armor, he can swim to the opposite side of the moat and climb out in one round. He cannot climb back up the frictionless wall without a rope, but the opposite wall of the moat is rough; a character can climb that side without assistance.

A character who wears any non-magical armor other than leather will automatically sink to the bottom of the moat in the same round that he falls in. In one round afterward, he can make his way to the rough slope on the other side and then climb up in 1-4 more rounds.

At the start of each round after the first, the DM should roll 1d20 for each character in the moat to check for drowning. If the result surpasses the character's constitution, the character drowns. After five consecutive rounds in the moat, a character will drown automatically, even if he passes all of his constitution checks. Characters can be rescued before they die, of course.

Note: Quippers will first attack characters who sink underwater. An underwater character can counterattack only with a spear, dagger, short sword, or similar thrusting weapon; swimming characters can only use a dagger. No other weapons work in the water (as per underwater combat rules in the DMG).

### Approaching the gate

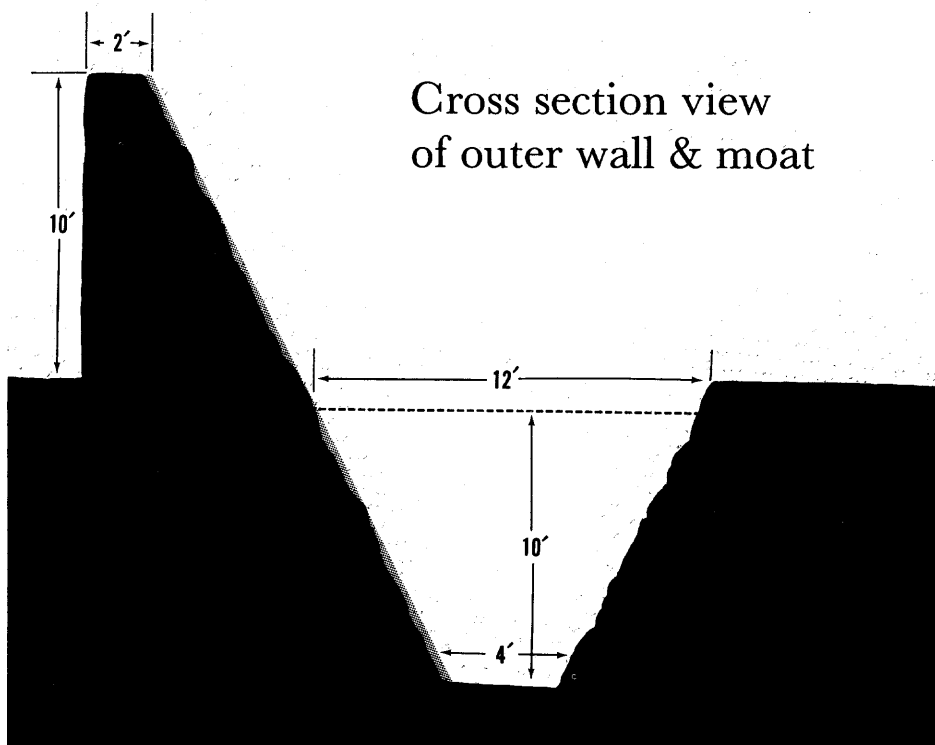
If characters come along the lane and approach the front gate directly, the first things they will notice are two large statues of apes, apparently made of pink stone, standing before both sides of the front gate. The statues — actually stone golems — will notice any character who comes along the lane to within 60 feet of the doors. The guildmasters had these golems installed here to keep Mekkari and his allies away, and also paid to have *magic mouth* spells cast upon each of them. Once and once only, to each character who approaches, the golems will ask, "Friend or foe?" For good results, the character should answer as if the question were "Friend or foe of Mekkari?" If the character answers "foe," the golems will turn and push the doors open, allowing that character to pass without resistance. If any character answers "friend," the golems will stand blocking the doorway, and will attempt to keep the "friend" from entering. No second chances are possible where this answer is concerned.

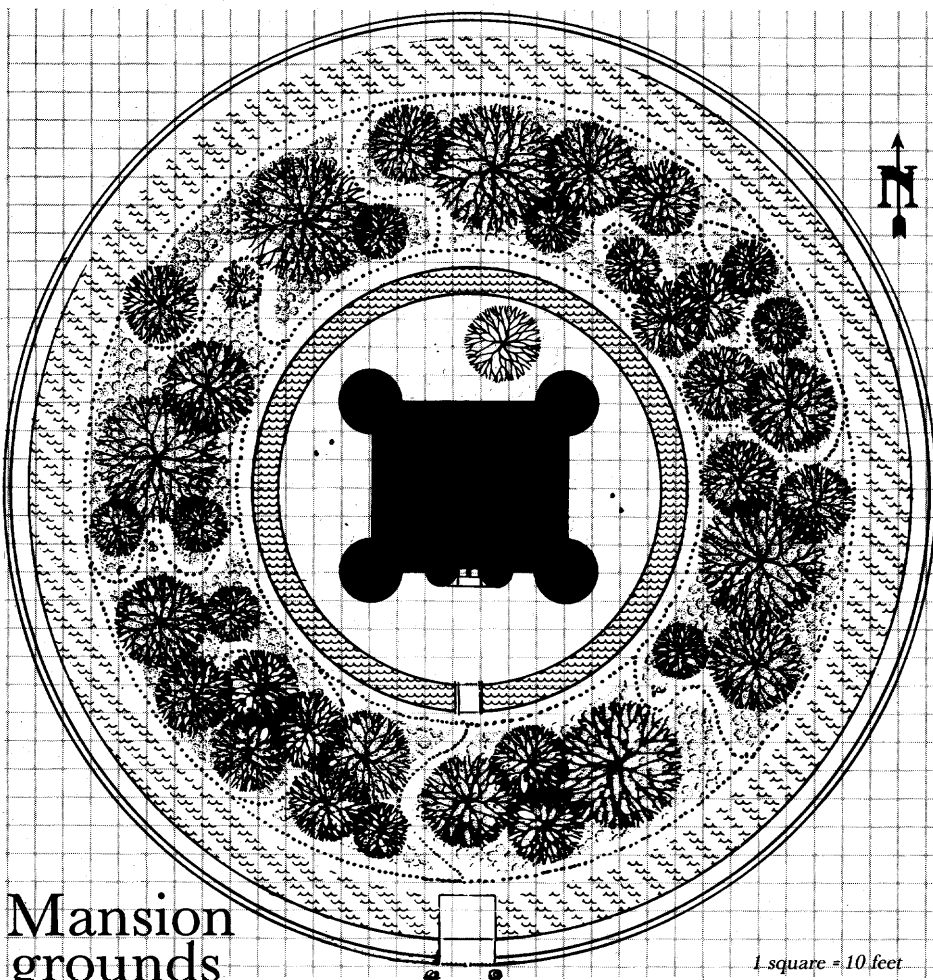
The golems will not hinder any character who scales the outer wall and gets across the moat (see "Scouting around," above), regardless of how that character may have answered the question. Anyone who doesn't answer and then tries to get through the doorway is treated as a "friend."

The golems will not attack "friends" with intent to kill, but will stand blocking each side of the double-doored iron gate. If a "friend" attempts to get past them or tries to attack one of them, that golem will throw off a slow spell that affects the offending character for 20 rounds. Each golem can do this only once, and the magic offers no saving throw.

Then, with the *slowed* character and each offender encountered thereafter, the golems will try to grab characters and throw them away from the gate, needing an 8 to hit (grab) AC 0. The grab does no damage, but the toss will be a distance of 10-60 feet, and the character will suffer 1 point of damage for each 10 feet thrown.

The golems serve primarily to harass the party; none of the player characters in the tournament game can effectively attack a stone golem, which forces them to take the tougher route into the mansion (over the wall). In any event, if the golems are somehow neutralized, none of the tournament PCs (singly or in a group) are strong enough to force open the massive iron doors. If a "friend" somehow manages to slip past the golems and move through the gate after they have opened it, the golems will not pursue that character into the area inside the wall.





## Mansion grounds

### The path to the mansion

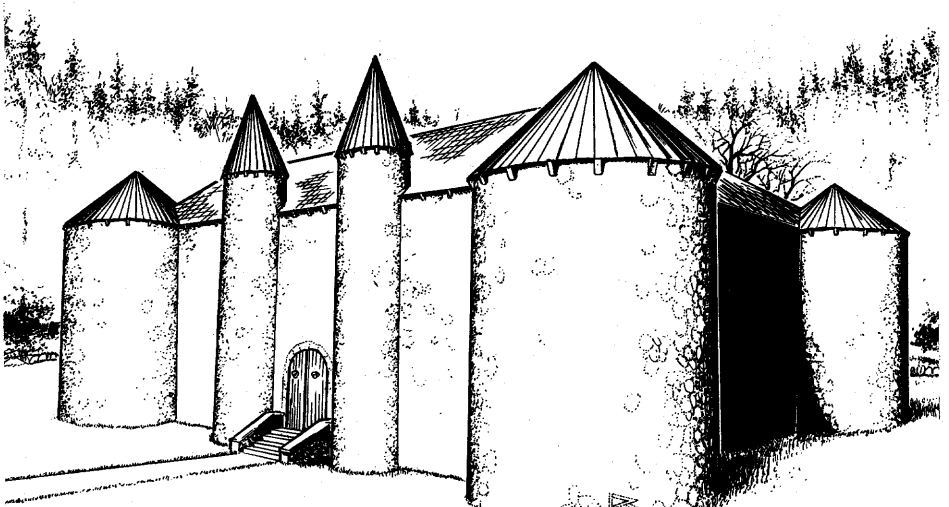
After characters overcome these obstacles (moat, gate, or both), they will notice a path parallel to the inner bank of the moat. This path encircles the mansion grounds; other paths diverge from the main route periodically, leading off into the woods. These secondary paths appear to have been designed for scenic walks, and wind lazily through the trees.

The trees stand 20' to 50' high. The paths measure 5' across, and are somewhat overgrown with weeds. Eventually all of the secondary paths run into another inner path, which circles a smaller moat. The mansion lies beyond. Clear water fills this moat, revealing fish swimming below the water's surface.

If a PC approaches the inner moat, fish congregate in the water like a small mob, gazing up with open mouths and following the character as he walks. The fish resemble quippers, but they're a harmless species. The moat is 10' deep, like the outer moat. If anyone tries to swim across, the fish act just like quippers, nibbling frantically at the character but inflicting no damage. (DMs should roll dice as if the fish were attacking, but ignore the results). The PCs may cross this moat like the previous one, except that either bank can be climbed. Otherwise the situation is the same, including chances for drowning.

The characters cannot jump across this moat. If they don't want to swim it, they

can try to cross the wooden bridge leading to the front side of the mansion. An unarmed elf stands on the other side of the bridge, dressed in green clothes. For reasons detailed below, the elf *cannot* be surprised. Unless characters attack him, he will act in a carefree, casual manner. He offers absolutely no response to questions, though he watches the characters carefully. If a character casts a spell on the elf, see the description below. Detect *evil/good* has no effect. Detect *magic* reveals that the elf is magical.



As soon as a character sets foot on the bridge, the elf will point at him, and *instantly* the PC must save vs. spell (as for will-force magic) or be seized with *fear* for 6 rounds. Once stricken by *fear*, the PC will run into the woods to hide; he won't come out until the *fear* wears off or a remove *fear* spell is cast upon him. The elf can inflict *fear* once per round within 180', affecting one victim at a time.

Anyone who reaches the other side of the bridge finds the elf facing him at a 30' distance. The elf will shake his head and motion for the party to leave the area. If this order is refused or the elf is attacked, the "elf" shows his true nature; it is actually a *polymorphed* green slaad. The slaad will attack fearlessly until the characters flee or die, or it is slain.

The slaad's statistics are: AC 3, MV 9", HD 9+3, HP 35, D/Att 2-1 6 bite/3-8 claw/3-8 claw. A +1 or better weapon is needed to hit it. Its special powers include: *ESP* (which prevents surprise in tournament play), *cause fear*, *polymorph self* and *detect invisibility*. Other slaad powers have been constrained by spells that Mekkari's enemies placed upon the creature. The slaad can use one of its powers once per round at will. It has 50% magic resistance.

The green slaad cannot enter the mansion or cross the moat; it is forced to stay on the inside of the moated area next to the mansion. If slain, the creature disappears completely. It has no treasure.

### The mansion

A set of heavy oaken doors serves as the only entrance to Mekkari's mansion. The outer walls are enchanted to be super-slick, but they appear rough. They cannot be climbed.

A knocker with an imp's face is bolted to each of the oaken doors. If the characters approach, one "imp" asks the following questions of the lead character:

- 1) What is your name?
- 2) What is your quest?
- 3) What is your favorite color?

The character's answers do not matter;

the doors are not locked, and they can be opened at any time. Attacking the knockers has no effect; they are here to delay the party. The PCs can safely ignore them.

### Special notes on the interior

1) Everything in the mansion radiates a magical aura, though most objects do nothing unusual. Magical effects, where they exist, are at the 16th level of ability.

2) All ceilings are 10' high.

3) Characters must roll to open doors as usual, but all inhabitants of the house may open doors just by touching them. If a door is left open, it closes in one round.

4) *Locate object* will not reveal the location of the Heart of Light, but will work on any other nonliving object in the house.

5) When random items are called for, turn to the list at the end of the adventure and roll for a result listed there. In non-tournament play, extra items may be added.

6) Characters cannot cut through walls, ceilings, or floors in the mansion, though they may damage or destroy any of the thick oaken doors in the interior if they want to.

### 1: Entry hall

10' x 40' ; 4 doors; thickly carpeted.

In this room, footsteps make no sound. A 10' wide stairway leads up to a landing, then branches up to the left and right. A door stands on each side of the entry hall; both doors are closed. A *continual light* spell illuminates the hallway from above the center of the hall. Oil paintings of men and women line the walls; anyone who touches them discovers they are wet and smear easily. In each picture, the eyes of the subject seem to follow the party.

*West alcove:* A full suit of platemail armor including a closed helm stands here. A halberd is clutched in the glove. If a PC touches the suit, he takes 2-8 points of electrical damage. Then the armor falls apart, and the halberd tumbles to the alcove. Neither the suit nor the halberd is exceptionally valuable.

*East alcove:* A huge stuffed wolf, 4' high at the shoulder, stands in this alcove. The wolf does nothing but look dangerous.

A thorough search of the entry hall produces one random item after 10 minutes, but nothing else.

### 2: Library

15' x 15', plus tower 20' in diameter; 2 doors; thick carpeting.

Bookshelves line the curved wall in this room, extending from floor to ceiling. There seems to be no way to reach the higher shelves. A 5' diameter circular table rests in here, over which a *continual light* spell has been cast. Six chairs line the walls in the square part of the room (2 in each corner).

Standing right where the "2" is on the map is an animated ogre skeleton (9' tall; AC 7; MV 12"; HD 5; HP 30; D/Att 1-10; immune to *sleep*, *charm*, *hold*, or cold attacks; fire does normal damage; blunt



weapons do full damage, but sharp ones do half damage; holy water does 2-8). The skeleton wears black robes and an iron crown, and carries a huge staff. The creature strongly resembles a huge lich. Clerics *cannot* turn the skeleton, because of the special enchantments placed upon it.

When the party enters the room, the

skeleton looks down on them, awaiting their orders. The skeleton only follows orders to: 1) retrieve books from the shelves; 2) attack intruders (if told to do this, it attacks the party); or 3) keep standing and do nothing. If the party gives no commands, the skeleton just stands and watches. If attacked, the skeleton defends itself with the staff.



**Gnome illusionist/thief 5th/5th level**

HP 24 AC 3 front, 6 rear Armor: +2 leather  
 Str 11 Int 15 Wis 10 Dex 17 Con 10 Cha 12  
 Move base 6" Ht. 3'6" Wt. 85# Age 65 AI CN

Saving throws:

Par/poison	Pet/poly	R/S/W	Breath	Spell
12	11	9	15	10

Languages: Alignment, common, dwarvish, gnome, goblin, halfling, kobold, burrowing mammals.

Special abilities: detect slope 80%; detect unsafe walls/ceilings/floors 70%; detect depth underground 60%; detect direction of travel underground 50%; infravision 60'; +4 to hit from behind, with triple damage; +1 to hit vs. kobolds & goblins; -4 to be hit by gnolls or larger humanoid and giants.

Bend bars/lift gates: 2% Open doors: 1-2

**Base number to hit AC 0: 19**

Weapons: Short sword; damage 1-6/1-8.

Dagger +1; damage 1-4/1-3 (+1); +1 bonus to hit (for magic); range 1"/2"/3".

Sling w/bullet, damage 2-5/2-7; +2 bonus to hit (for dexterity); range 5"/10"/20".

Sling w/stone, damage 1-4/1-4; +2 bonus to hit (for dexterity); range 4"/8"/16".

Proficient in: all weapons listed.

Thief abilities: pick pocket 55%, open locks 57%, detect traps 50% move silently 50% hide in shadows 41%, hear noise 30%, climb walls 75%, read languages 25%.

Magic items carried: +2 leather; +1 dagger; *bag of holding* (5,000 gp capacity).

Other equipment: wineskin; backpack; flint, steel, & tinder; torches (3); cloaks; rope (50'); belt purse w/30 gp; thieves tools; 20 sling bullets. (Torches illuminate a 40' radius and burn for 6 turns.)

Number of spells available: 1st level 4; 2nd level 2; 3rd level 1. (Choose from illusionist spell list.)

**Half-elf magic-user/thief 4th/6th level**

HP 27 AC 2 front, 6 rear Armor: leather with +2 ring

Str 13 Int 17 Wis 15 Dex 16 Con 15 Cha 16  
 Move base 12" Ht. 5'2" Wt. 105# Age 36 AI N

Saving throws:

Par/poison	Pet/poly	R/S/W	Breath	Spell
		11	15	12

(vs. fear: 11)

Languages: Alignment, common, elf, gnoll, gnome, goblin, halfling, hobgoblin, orc.

Special abilities: detect secret doors 1 in 6 within 10' (2 in 6 if searching); infravision 60'; +4 to hit from behind, with triple damage; 30% resistant to *sleep* and *charm*.

Bend bars/lift gates: 4% Open doors: 1-2

**Base number to hit AC 0: 19**

Weapons: Short sword +1; damage 1-6/1-8 (+1); +1 bonus to hit (for magic).

Dagger; damage 1-4/1-3; +1 bonus to hit (for strength); range 1"/2"/3".

Proficient in: both weapons listed.

Thief abilities: pick pocket 65% open locks 52% detect traps 45% move silently 47%, hide in shadows 42% hear noise 20% climb walls 92% read languages 30%.

Magic items carried: +1 short sword; +2 *ring of protection* (to AC only); *pearl of power* (2nd level spell).

Other equipment: wineskin; backpack; flint, steel, & tinder; torches (3); cloaks; rope (50'); belt purse w/30 gp; thieves tools; 4 daggers. (Torches illuminate a 40' radius and burn for 6 turns.)

Number of spells available: 1st level 3; 2nd level 2. (Choose from magic-user spell list.)

## The Twofold Talisman Character Sheets

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**Half-elf cleric/ranger 6th/6th level**

HP 43 AC 1 front, 2 rear Armor: +1 plate  
 normal shield

Str 17 Int 16 Wis 17 Dex 14 Con 17 Cha 10  
 Move base 9" Ht. 5'11" Wt. 140# Age 50 AI NG

Saving throws:

Par/poison	Pet/poly	R/S/W	Breath	Spell
9	12	13	13	14

(vs. fear: 11)

Languages: Alignment, common, elf, gnome, goblin, halfling, hobgoblin, orc.

Special abilities: detect secret doors 1 in 6 within 10' (2 in 6 if searching); infravision 60'; +6 to damage vs. giant-class creatures; 30% resistant to *sleep* and *charm*.

Bend bars/lift gates: 13% Open doors: 1-3

**Base number to hit AC 0: 16**

Weapons: Long sword +1; damage 1-8/1-12 (+2); +2 bonus to hit (for strength & magic).

Dagger; damage 1-4/1-3 (+1 for strength); +1 bonus to hit (for strength); range 1"/2"/3".

Short bow; damage 1-6/1-6; +1 bonus to hit (for strength); range 5"/10"/18".

Proficient in: all weapons listed, plus mace.

Turn undead on: skeleton D, zombie D, ghoul T, shadow T, wight 4, ghast 7, wraith 10, mummy 13, spectre 16, vampire 20.

Magic items carried: +1 plate mail; +1 long sword; +1 arrows (5); *cloak of elvenkind*.

Other equipment: wineskin; backpack; flint, steel, & tinder; torches (3); cloaks; rope (50'); belt purse w/30 gp; holy symbol; 20 normal arrows; 2 daggers. (Torches illuminate a 40' radius and burn for 6 turns.)

Number of spells available: 1st level 5; 2nd level 5; 3rd level 3. (Choose from cleric spell list.)

**Human cleric 7th level**

HP 49 AC 0 front, 2 rear Armor: +1 plate  
 +1 shield

Str 9 Int 15 Wis 17 Dex 14 Con 17 Cha 13  
 Move base 9" Ht. 5'6" Wt. 124# Age 30, AI CG

Saving throws:

Par/poison	Pet/poly	R/S/W	Breath	Spell
5	10	11	13	12

(vs. fear: 9)

Languages: Alignment, common, elf, goblin, halfling, hobgoblin, orc.

Special abilities: bonus spells for high wisdom.

Bend bars/lift gates: 1% Open doors: 1-2

**Base number to hit AC 0: 16**

Weapons: Mace +1; damage 2-7/1-6 (+1); +1 bonus to hit (for magic).

Staff; damage 1-6/1-6.

Hammer; damage 2-5/1-4; range 1"/2"/3".

Proficient in: all weapons listed.

Turn undead on: skeleton D, zombie D, ghoul D, shadow T, wight T, ghast 4, wraith 7, mummy 10, spectre 13, vampire 16.

Magic items carried: +1 plate mail; +1 shield; +1 mace; *periapt of proof against poison* (+2).

Other equipment: wineskin; backpack; flint, steel, & tinder; torches (3); cloaks; rope (50'); belt purse w/30 gp; holy symbol. (Torches illuminate a 40' radius and burn for 6 turns.)

Number of spells available: 1st level 5; 2nd level 5; 3rd level 3; 4th level 1. (Choose from cleric spell list.)

**Half-elf magic-user 7th level**

HP 35 AC 2 front, 4 rear Armor: bracers of AC 4  
 Str 12 Int 14 Wis 15 Dex 16 Con 17 Cha 11  
 Move base 12" Ht. 5'8" Wt. 104# Age 56 Al N

Saving throws:

Par/poison	Pet/poly	R/S/W	Breath	Spell
13	11	9	13	10

(vs. fear: 9)

Languages: Alignment, common, elf, gnome, goblin, halfling, hobgoblin, orc.

Special abilities: detect secret doors 1 in 6 within 10' (2 in 6 if searching); infravision 60'; 30% resistant to sleep and *charm*.

Bend bars/lift gates: 4% Open doors: 1-2

**Base number to hit AC 0: 19**

Weapons: Staff +1; damage 1-6/1-6 (+1); +1 bonus to hit (for magic).

Dagger; damage 1-4/1-3; +1 bonus to hit (for strength); range 1"/2"/3".

Dart; damage 1-3/1-2; +1 bonus to hit (for strength); range 1 1/2"/3"/4 1/2".

Proficient in: all weapons listed.

Magic items carried: bracers of protection, AC 4; 11 staff; *wand of fire* (4 charges).

Other equipment: wineskin; backpack; flint, steel, & tinder; torches (3); cloaks; rope (50'); belt purse w/30 gp; 6 darts; 2 daggers. (Torches illuminate a 40' radius and burn for 6 turns.)

Number of spells available: 1st level 4; 2nd level 3; 3rd level 2; 4th level 1. (Choose from magic-user spell list.)

**Dwarf fighter 7th level**

HP 57 AC 2 front, 4 rear Armor: +1 chain mail  
 +1 shield

Str 18/95 Int 11 Wis 12 Dex 10 Con 16 Cha 9(7)

Move base 6" Ht. 4'2" Wt. 156# Age 142 Al LG

Saving throws:

Par/poison	Pet/poly	R/S/W	Breath	Spell
6	11	8	12	9

Languages: Alignment, common, dwarvish, gnome, goblin, kobold, orc.

Special abilities: 3 attacks per 2 rounds; detect slope 75%; detect new work 75%; detect sliding/shifting wall 66<sup>2/3</sup>%; detect stonework traps 50%; detect depth underground 60%; detect direction of travel underground 50%; infravision 60'; +1 to hit vs. goblins, half orcs, orcs, hobgoblins; -4 to be hit by ogres or larger humanoids and giants.

Bend bars/lift gates: 35% Open doors: 1-4 (1)

**Base number to hit AC 0: 14**

Weapons: Battle axe +1; damage 1-8/1-8 (+6); +3 bonus to hit (for strength & magic).

Hand axe; damage 1-6/1-4 (+5); +2 bonus to hit (for strength); range 1"/2"/3".

Dagger; damage 1-4/1-3 (+5); +2 bonus to hit (for strength); range 1"/2"/3".

Proficient in: all weapons listed, plus mace and short sword.

Magic items carried: +1 chain mail; +1 shield; +1 battle axe; *potion of water breathing*.

Other equipment: wineskin; backpack; flint, steel, & tinder; torches (3); rope (50'); belt purse w/50 gp; 2 daggers. (Torches illuminate a 40' radius and burn for 6 turns.)

# The Twofold Talisman Character Sheets

(Reproduce or photocopy these pages, then cut apart)

**Halfling thief 6th level**

HP 35 AC 7 front, 7 rear Armor: +1 leather  
 Str 14 Int 8 Wis 10 Dex 13 Con 16 Cha 6  
 Move base 9" Ht. 3'0" Wt. 60# Age 41 Al LN

Saving throws:

Par/poison	Pet/poly	R/S/W	Breath	Spell
8	11	8	15	9

Languages: Alignment, common, dwarvish, elf, gnome, goblin, halfling, orc.

Special abilities: detect slope 75%; detect direction of travel underground 50%; infravision 30'; +4 to hit from behind, with triple damage; surprise on 1-4 if 90' from rest of party.

Bend bars/lift gates: 7% Open doors: 1-2

**Base number to hit AC 0: 19**

Weapons: Short sword +1; damage 1-6/1-8 (+1); +1 bonus to hit (for magic).

Dart +3; damage 1-3/1-2 (+3); +3 bonus to hit (for magic); range 1 1/2"/3"/4 1/2".

Club; damage 1-6/1-3; range 1"/2"/3".

Proficient in: all weapons listed.

Thief abilities: pick pocket 60%, open locks 57% detect traps 50% move silently 57%, hide in shadows 52%, hear noise 25%, climb walls 77%, read languages 25% .

Magic items carried: +1 short sword, detects precious metals within 10'; +3 darts (3); *boots of levitation*.

Other equipment: wineskin; backpack; flint, steel, & tinder; torches (3); cloaks; rope (50'); belt purse w/30 gp; thieves tools; 3 darts. (Torches illuminate a 40' radius and burn for 6 turns.)

**Human fighter 7th level**

HP 50 AC 1 front, 4 rear Armor: chain mail  
 +1 shield

Str 18/50 Int 13 Wis 8 Dex 15 Con 15 Cha 14

Move base 9" Ht. 6'2" Wt. 175# Age 28 Al CG

Saving throws:

Par/poison	Pet/poly	R/S/W	Breath	Spell
9	10	11	11	12

Languages: Alignment, common, dwarvish, elf.

Special abilities: 3 attacks per 2 rounds.

Bend bars/lift gates: 20% Open doors: 1-3

**Base number to hit AC 0: 15**

Weapons: Two-handed sword; damage 1-10/3-18 (+3); +1 bonus to hit (for strength).

Hand axe; damage 1-6/1-4 (+3); +1 bonus to hit (for strength).

Mace +1; damage 2-7/1-6 (+4); +2 bonus to hit (for strength & magic).

Proficient in: all weapons listed, plus long sword, short sword, and dagger.

Magic items carried: +1 shield; +1 mace; +1 *ring of protection*; *potion of invulnerability*.

Other equipment: wineskin; backpack; flint, steel, & tinder; torches (3); rope (50'); belt purse w/50 gp; two-handed sword; 2 hand axes. (Torches illuminate a 40' radius and burn for 6 turns.)

The books in the library are written in common, elven, and dwarven, and concern history, geography, and politics. Like practically every other object in the mansion, they're covered with dust.

If the PCs search the library, they discover one random item after 10 minutes, or two after 20 minutes.

### 3: Parlor

15' x 15'; 2 doors; thick carpeting.

Pink silk wall hangings adorn the walls of this room. A long couch sits against the west wall, facing a huge mural of field flowers to the east. If anyone sits on the couch, the doors in the room swing shut and become *wizard locked*. Flying insects begin to pour out of the enchanted picture, attempting to sting everyone in the room. Characters cannot effectively swat the insects, because too many of them appear. Only smoke or fire drives the insects away. After 10 rounds, the little pests return to the enchanted picture to wait for their next set of victims. They will not leave the room. If characters search the room for 10 minutes, and look under the couch during that time, they will find one random item.

During the insect attack, characters take 1 HP of damage per round, unless they repel the attack or escape. *Dispel magic* or a *knock* spell will open the doors (success automatic in tournament play). A strong character may also open them; if his or her strength score is 18/91-99, the chance for success is 1 in 6. If strength is 18/00, the chance for success is 2 in 6.

### 4: Great hall

10' x 50'; 5 normal doors, 1 secret door; hardwood floor.

A continual light spell illuminates the great hall. If a character enters the hall, roll d6 to determine the hall's inhabitants. After

every 30-minute period, roll again if a character enters. Results for each die roll are as follows:

- 1) 6 giant rats (1' long). The rats attack if they outnumber the party; otherwise, they flee to room 12. (AC 7; MV 12"; HD 1; HP 4 each; D/Att 1-3)
- 2) 4 giant warrior ants (2' long). The ants always attack. (AC 3; MV 18"; HD 3; HP 15; D/Att 2-8 + poison sting for 3-12, or 1-4 if save vs. poison is made)
- 3) 2 volts. They always attack. (AC 3; MV 6" flying; HD 2+1; HP 10; immune to electrical attacks; D/Att 1-4; if bite hits, the volt cannot be removed from the victim's neck and drains 1-4 HP per round thereafter; also will lash at victim with tail for 2-12 electrical damage once it is attached; no "to hit" roll needed for tail)

4-6) Room is empty.

### 5: Storeroom

10' x 10'; 2 doors; hardwood floor.

Shelves line the walls of this darkened room, holding linens, tools, and empty jars. After characters search for 1 turn, they find a jar with a large, cut gemstone inside. The stone is clear, like a diamond, but any dwarf or gnome would know it's cheap quartz crystal (1 gp). The crystal bears no resemblance to the Heart of Light.

The door opposite the entryway bears a sign marked "To the Furnaces." The door is warm to the touch. Anyone who opens it feels a blast of warm air and sees a long stairway leading down, curving to the left. The stairway seems to go on forever, because of a powerful illusion placed upon it. No matter how long characters descend the stairs, they never seem to reach the bottom, yet the air grows hotter and hotter. Strangely enough, the characters can go back up the stairs in one round, no matter

how long they descended them.

A *detect illusion* reveals that the stairwell ends just after the first turn, before a solid wall. The illusion makes the characters march in place in front of the wall. If a character attempts to disbelieve the illusion, he may save vs. spell to end the illusion's effects on him. *Dispel illusion* or *dispel magic* will remove the illusion for good.

Note: If characters look back up the stairs while descending, the top appears farther and farther away. Therefore, ascending the stairs in such a short time will seem doubly amazing.

### 6: Minor laboratory

10' x 25'; 1 secret door; hardwood floor.

This room is completely dark. It is filled with workbenches, shelves, and cabinets, all of which contain alchemical equipment — bottles of strange liquids, unknown powders, etc. A large stone urn covered by a lid stands in the southwest corner of the room. Removing the lid requires the same die roll as opening a door. The moment the lid is off, smoke pours out of the urn, filling the room and any areas beyond an open door. The smoke fills the available area in 1 round, effectively blinding all characters for 1 turn (10 rounds) thereafter, after which the smoke begins to fade. Blinded characters have a -4 "to hit" on all attacks. DMs may place a small monster here in non-tournament play.

If characters smash the alchemical equipment, they have a 25% cumulative chance per round of setting off an explosion for 4-16 points of damage per character, inflicted upon everyone in the room. Anyone who drinks or eats a substance from this room must save vs. poison or die.

A careful search of the room reveals one random item per turn until three items are found.

### 7: Servant's bedroom

20' diameter tower, plus 10' x 10' area; 1 door; thick carpeting.

This room contains a bed, bookshelves, and chairs. A careful search lasting at least 1 turn will produce a slip of paper with these words: "Remember to return Mickey's beholder to him as soon as possible."

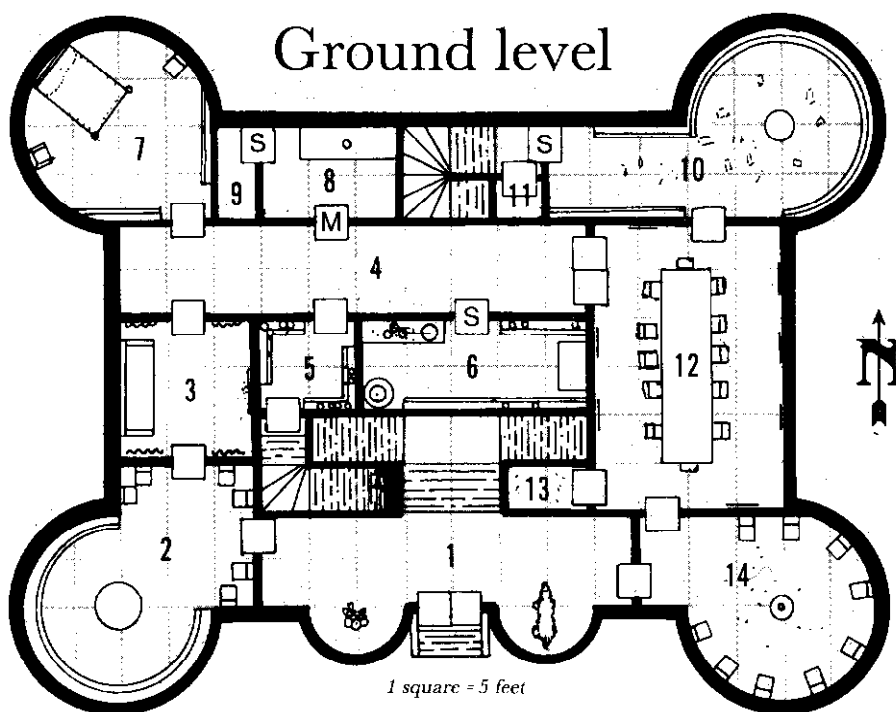
Under the bed lies a box (locked and trapped) that contains 100 platinum pieces. A thief may try to open the box and remove the trap (a poisoned needle, save vs. poison at +2 or sleep for 24 hours). A note lies inside the box, reading: "Put this with the rest of the cash down in the furnaces."

Characters will find nothing else in the room.

### 8: First aid room

10' x 15'; 1 door + 1 secret door; hardwood floor.

The door to this room bears a sign that says "Do Not Open." Anyone who opens the door discovers that it is actually a huge killer mimic (see below), and the PC's hand sticks to the doorknob. The door then punches the character for 3-12 points of



damage per round, attacking until it is slain. Once the mimic dies, the character stuck to the doorknob can pull free. The mimic (AC 7; HD 9; HP 45) is large. Only two other characters besides the one stuck to the door may attack it.

A large table stands inside the room. A jar rests on the table, with a yellow smiling "happy face" for a label. The jar contains five applications of *Keoghtom's ointment* (heals 9-12 points per application, plus cure *poison* and *cure disease*).

The room contains nothing more besides the secret door in the west wall.

### 9: Secret room

10' x 5'; 1 secret door; hardwood floor.

A *fear* spell strikes any character who goes through the secret door (save vs. spell applicable). If the save fails, the character runs (or tries to run) for 10 rounds to get out of the mansion and into the surrounding woods. Opening a door takes 1 round, but crossing a room takes essentially no time at all.

Anyone who saves vs. spell and enters the room finds a small teddy bear labeled "Pooky" in the south part of the room. Pooky acts like a *ring of protection* +3 for anyone who carries him.

The room contains nothing else.

### 10: Kitchen

10' x 50' plus 20' diameter tower; 1 door + 1 secret door; hardwood floor.

The kitchen is extremely hot. Under the illumination of a *continual light* spell, characters can see that the room is in complete disarray. Shelves line the walls, and a round stone table sits under the light. The table's surface is magically hot; if touched, it inflicts 4 points of damage. Rectangular paper boxes lie all over the kitchen, filled with moldy food. Empty wine bottles litter the floor, all of them labeled "Mad Dog #5: Our Best For Live-Alone Bachelors." Rat droppings cover the floor, though no rats are present.

Two giant warrior ants wait in the west end of the kitchen, and will attack anyone who enters. (2' long; AC 3; MV 18"; HD 3; HP 15; D/Att 2-8 + poison sting for 3-12, or 1-4 if save vs. poison is made)

Careful searching reveals one random item per turn for a maximum of two turns. The first item includes a note asking "Where is Mickey's beholder? It was in the museum yesterday, but seems to have been moved. Your faithful butler."

### 11: The itty-bitty room

5' x 5'; 1 door; hardwood floor.

The door is marked "Express Exit." Inside, the room is dark and completely empty. Anyone who steps inside must save vs. spell or be *teleported* outside to the two pink stone apes (golems) at the front gates. The pink apes challenge the newcomer(s) immediately. Of course, at the adventure's end, this quick exit could prove very useful.

The stairway next to the room ascends to the next floor, 15' above.

### 12: Dining room

30' x 20'; 5 doors; hardwood floor.

A crystal chandelier hangs from the center of the ceiling, suspended over a 20' long, 5' wide dining table. Numerous *continual light* spells shine from the huge fixture. Many landscape paintings hang on the walls, and dust covers everything. The table is bare, and twelve chairs sit around it — labeled "Sleepy," "Grumpy," "Doc," "Dopey," etc. (Make up names as needed.)

Three volts hide in the bright chandelier, but no one can see them until they levitate down, surprising opponents on a d6 roll of 1-4. They will attack immediately. (AC 3; MV 6" flying; HD 2+1; HP 10; immune to electrical attacks; D/Att 1-4; if bite hits, the volt cannot be removed from the victim's neck and drains 1-4 HP per round thereafter; also will lash at victim with tail for 2-12 electrical damage once it is attached; no "to hit" roll needed for tail)

Searching the room reveals one item after one turn of searching, but nothing further.

### 13: Closet

5' x 5'; 1 door; hardwood floor.

Expensive silverware fills this closet. Picking up all the items takes only one turn. However, if PCs take the treasure out of the mansion, the silver becomes extremely heavy. Anyone who carries even a single fork will be suddenly pinned to the ground by the weight. The victim stays pinned until the silver is discarded.

### 14: Lounge

10' x 15' plus 20' diameter tower; 2 doors; carpeted floor.

The lounge is very dark. Chairs line the walls of the tower, all of them facing a small table on which a 12-inch-diameter crystal globe lies. Moldy food and rat-chewed paper litter the floor. Next to the globe lies a note that reads, "Mekkari, I know you're busy, but I want my beholder back. Mickey the Great."

If anyone touches the crystal ball, it activates; a picture forms inside. Voices come from within, speaking a strange language. Viewers can see an oddly dressed, hysterical red-haired woman, arguing with a dark-haired man. He speaks very quickly, while unseen people laugh continuously. If a character watches this scene for more than 1 round, he falls asleep, as if hit by a *sleep* spell. He sleeps for one hour, unless someone (or something) wakes him by force. The show seems to go on forever, except for interruptions once every turn in which the words "I Love Lucy" appear briefly before the scene re-forms again. Once activated, the ball cannot be turned off.

If characters search the room for one turn, they will find two random items.

### 15: Museum

30' x 20' plus 20' diameter tower; 3 doors; hardwood floor.

As characters reach the top of the stairs, they can look into a large area lit by two *continual light* spells. Lining the walls are

suits of armor, weapons racks holding every sort of polearm, and several stuffed animals (grizzly bear, moose, manticores, spotted lion, and minotaur). Nothing happens unless the PCs touch something. Then the minotaur comes to life (he wasn't really stuffed), snatching a huge axe off the wall behind him. He attacks until slain. (8' tall; AC 6; MV 12"; HD 6+3; HP 40; D/Att 1-10 (halberd) plus bite for 1-4)

A search of the room reveals the following message on the floor: "Hovering above this plaque is a dreaded beholder, which is held here by mighty spells and cannot escape." Nothing hovers over the spot, of course. After one turn, the search reveals one random item.

Characters will notice that the door to 18 is marked "Treasure Room" in 145 different tongues, including all the languages that the PCs can read.

### 16: Plant laboratory

20' x 15' plus 20' diameter tower; 2 doors; hardwood floor.

A *darkness* spell keeps the plant lab dark. The spell renders torches, lanterns, and infravision useless in this room. But a *dispel magic*, *light*, or *continual light* spell negates the darkness completely, though the spells cancel each other out and another light source is needed for illumination after the magical *darkness* is gone.

The room smells awful. Dozens of growing trays with mushrooms line shelves about the room. Eating one of these mushrooms has no effect on a character.

A large black box rests in the room; it is wooden and measures 7' x 3'. A character who opens the box will find a layer of dirt within, which appears recently disturbed. If characters do anything more than open the box (e.g., move it or touch the dirt), they will awaken a huge warrior ant that rests below the surface. The ant will leap out, landing on a nearby character and attacking. Because it has stayed in the room for so long, the ant is white from a fungus infestation. Except for the fungus, the ant has all the qualities of a normal giant warrior ant. (2' long; AC 3; MV 18"; HD 3; HP 15; D/Att 2-8 + poison sting for 3-12, or 1-4 if save vs. poison is made)

If fighting in the dark, both the ant and the characters have a -4 "to hit" on all attacks.

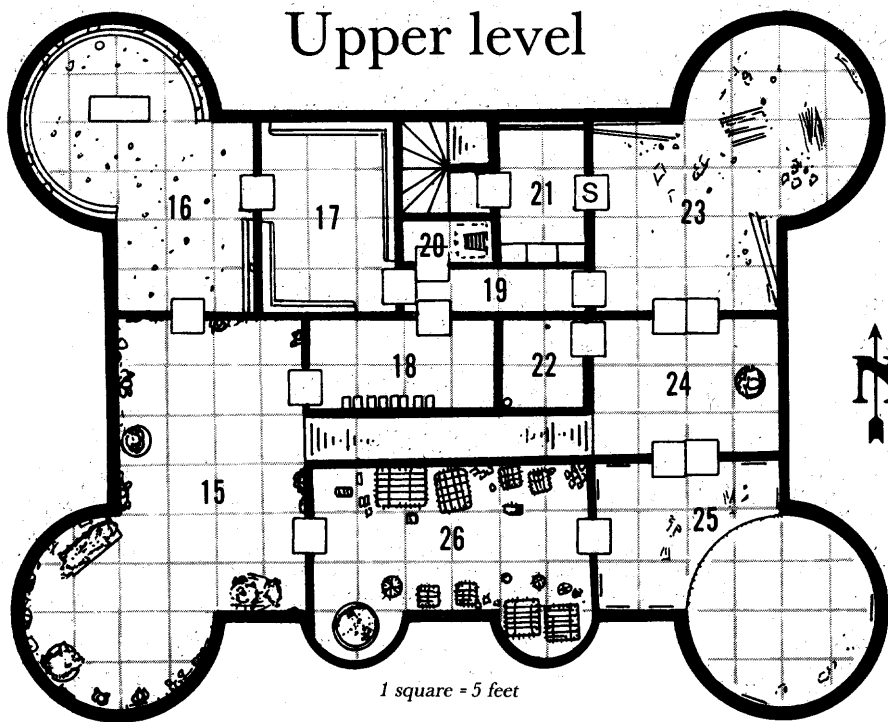
### 17: Magic-user's library

20' x 15'; 2 doors; hardwood floors.

Opening the door to this room alerts a shrieker in the center (AC 7; MV 1"; 3 HD; 15 HP). After the shrieker goes off, the characters will also hear sounds of running feet with the shouts of men-at-arms coming from either area 19 (if the characters enter from 16) or area 16 (if the characters enter from 19). The approaching guards seem to get closer and louder for 3 melee rounds, and then the sound ends entirely (it was just an automatic alarm). The shrieker screams as long as someone stays in the room, unless it dies first.



# Upper level



1 square = 5 feet

Bookshelves line the walls of this room. All books bear such weighty titles as *The Art of Necromancy*, *Liches and Wights of the World*, and *Guide to the Lesser Planes of the Abyss*. However, fully half of all the volumes here are book covers placed around old copies of *Playelf Magazine* and comic books. Characters must spend 10 hours here if they wish to sort through all the contents. After one hour, they will find a book with a scroll pressed flat between two pages. The scroll contains these spells: *read magic*, *hold portal*, *light*, *magic missile*. All spells are at the 6th level of effect. Characters will find nothing else of interest.

## 18: Treasure room

10' x 20'; 2 doors; hardwood floor.

The treasure room (a dubious title) contains copies and mock-ups of eight major magic items. Three of them are harmless duplicates of the *Crown of Might*, *Hand of Vecna*, and *Mace of Cuthbert*. The other five imitations have special powers: the *Axe of Dwarfish Lords* is a +1 battleaxe; the *Invulnerable Coat of Arnd* is +1 chain mail; the *Sword of Kas* is a cursed short sword that always misses its target; the *Wand of Orcus* does 1-8 points of damage to anyone who picks it up, once only per character; and the *Heart of Light* is really a glass gem (actual value 1 gp) with a *continual light* spell cast on it.

Each artifact is sealed in a glass case on the wall, with a little card beside the case that identifies it. The cards do not mention that these aren't true artifacts. Dwarves and gnomes can identify the glass gem as a fake after 10 minutes of inspecting it from outside the display case, or immediately if the display case is broken open for a closer look. A character who takes out the drawing of the Heart of Light and looks at it again now can recognize the gem as false if the player

rolls the character's intelligence score or less on a d20. Characters can break any of the sealed cases open at no risk to themselves.

The room contains nothing else.

## 19: Hall

5' x 20'; 4 doors; hardwood floor.

This hall is empty. The doors in the hall have been enchanted, so that characters can open only one door at a time. When the first door is opened, the other doors are wizard locked until the first door is shut. The door to area 18 is labeled "Treasure Room" in 145 tongues, including all the languages the player characters can read.

The door to area 20 opens automatically if a good-aligned character tries to open it, but it refuses to budge for anyone else.

## 20: Ladder room

5' x 10'; 1 door; hardwood floor.

This tiny room contains only a ladder, which ascends to a trapdoor in the ceiling. Only a good-aligned character can climb the ladder; others can climb halfway up before falling off for 1-4 points of damage.

A tiny attic lies at the top of the ladder. The room measures 5' on all sides, and a small (6-inch-cube) box sits on the floor in the center of the room, amidst a clutter of other objects that are all unremarkable. The box will be found after 1 round by anyone who climbs the ladder and begins to search the attic.

The box has lettering on it; anyone who tries to read it will detonate these *explosive runes* for 6d4+6 points of damage. (Reader gets no save; all others in attic or in room 20 can save for half damage.) A thief has a 5% chance of detecting the danger in the runes before he reads them, and a magic-user has a 5% *per level* chance of doing so. The blast does not harm the box. *Dispel magic* eliminates the runes, but characters

can open the box at any time without triggering the runes as long as they don't read them.

A 3-inch-diameter gem lies inside the box. The gem appears to be made of dull, cloudy glass. If a player character touches the gem, it begins to glow brightly (see the description of the Heart of Light near the end of the module for details).

## 21: Magic-user's storeroom

15' x 10'; 1 door + 1 secret door; hardwood floor.

Cabinets and shelves fill this room, housing all kinds of jars. Each jar is labeled with the name of a spell, but a one-turn search will reveal that all but two of the jars are empty. The jar marked "ESP" contains 42 copper pieces. The one marked "Fear" is full of chicken feathers. If a PC stirs the chicken feathers, he finds a note at the bottom, which states: "Collected from the Giant Chicken of Bristol by M. Python. *Do not eat these!*" Any character who eats a feather is instantly *polymorphed* into a chicken, unless he makes a save vs. *polymorph* successfully. The chicken character stands 1 foot tall. *Dispel magic* removes the spell, but a system shock roll is required.

Characters may detect a secret door behind one set of shelves. The door contains a vertical slot about 1 inch high. If someone drops a copper piece in the slot, the door opens (nothing else will open the door). The coin falls into room 23, alerting all creatures there to the PCs' presence — but the PCs will not know this.

## 22: Storeroom

10' x 10'; 1 door; hardwood floor.

Characters must pull this door outward to open it. On a roll of 1-3 on d6, the party notices nothing unusual about the room, except for a metal cylinder in a far corner. Otherwise, the room appears empty. On a roll of 4-6, characters see a thin film that covers the space in the open doorway like a soap bubble.

A gelatinous cube fills the room, and it cannot leave. Characters who walk into the room take 2-8 points of damage if the cube penetrates their armor. They must save vs. paralysis or be sucked into the cube and paralyzed for 5-20 rounds, taking 2-8 points of damage each round.

Statistics for the gelatinous cube are AC 8, HD 4, HP 25. The cube is immune to electricity, fear, sleep, hold, paralysis, and polymorph. The effects of cold are reduced, as per the Monster Manual.

If characters slay the cube, it falls apart into a gooey mess, flooding area 24 and the stairs leading downward from there. Movement through area 24 requires a roll of 3d6; if the result surpasses the character's dexterity, the character falls down, taking 1 HP of damage. Check for falling once per round for any character in this area. Any attempt to descend the stairs results in an automatic fall and 2-12 points of damage. The character can make it to the first floor this way, albeit in a damaged condition.

A metal scroll tube lies inside the closet. If a PC removes the stopper, he'll find a parchment inside the tube which reads, "Mickey — Sorry about your beholder, but I haven't got the faintest idea where it is now. The Heart lies in the attic. Mekkari."

The room contains nothing else.

### 23 : Main alchemical laboratory

20' x 20' plus 20' diameter tower; 3 doors + 1 secret door; hardwood floor

Anyone who enters this room sees the smashed remains of a laboratory. So much litter, debris, and trash lies in here that two giant scorpions can lie in hiding; they will surprise anyone who enters on a roll of 1-4 on d6. The scorpions can be surprised, too, but at normal odds. The room is dark, but not because of magic.

Statistics for the two giant scorpions are AC 3, MV 15"; HD 5+5; HP 30; D/Att 1-10/1-10/1-4 + poison (save or die). The scorpions can attack three opponents at once. They know the room well, and have no "to hit" penalties in the dark.

The door to area 21 appears to be normal, but if characters open it they discover a brick wall with a small vertical slot one inch high. If anyone drops a coin through the slot, a secret door opens, providing access to area 21. Nothing else will open the secret door.

If characters search the room, they find one random item per turn until six items are located.

### 24: Upper hall

15' x 20'; 5 doors; hardwood floor.

This area is bare of detail, except for a large statue of Mekkari which looks very imposing. The statue portrays a fierce, brooding mage with a bald head and a beard, wearing heavy robes. If characters check the back of the statue, they may find a little secret door there, which opens to reveal a compartment. The compartment holds four wine bottles, all labeled "Mad Dog #5." The labels are false, however; the bottles really contain *potions of healing* (each will cure 2d4+2 HP).

### 25: Mekkari's bedroom

15' x 20' plus 20' diameter tower; 3 doors; carpet on floor.

A huge waterbed mattress takes up the entire tower area, and clothing litters the room. Paintings hang on the wall, depicting dragons, 20-sided polyhedral dice, and the Greek god of war.

The party may not notice the *invisible* beholder when they enter; it hovers 6' over the bed. At one time, it belonged to Mickey the Great, an old friend of the mansion's owner. Mekkari magically bound the monster so that it cannot use any of its eyes' powers except *telekinesis*. When a PC opens the door to the room, the beholder catches the first person to cross the threshold. It picks up the character (as long as the victim weighs less than 250 pounds) and pulls him over, intending to munch on him for 2-8 points of damage per bite. A *telekinesed*

character attacks at -4 "to hit," and loses all shield and dexterity bonuses. The beholder becomes visible when the *telekinesis* attack begins.

Anyone who runs up to slash the beholder discovers that the waterbed causes characters to have extremely unstable footing; at the start of each round, all characters on the bed must make a roll of 3d6. If the result exceeds the character's dexterity score, he falls and loses all attacks that round. The beholder stays above the bed. If it eats one character (that is, reduces the character's hit points to 0 and bites it for one more round thereafter to swallow it), then the beholder goes for another one. Characters can only attack the beholder's body, not its eyes, because of its elevation.

Statistics for the beholder are AC 0; HP 30 (in central body); attacks as 10 HD monster.

If characters search the room, they will find an empty crate labeled "Beholder Yummies," plus a total of 1,234 gp scattered on the floor.

### 26: Zoo/animal laboratory

15' x 30' plus 2 alcoves; 2 doors; hardwood floor.

All of the animals in Mekkari's mansion were originally kept in this room. Dozens of empty cages lie scattered about. A huge vat of algae lies in the western alcove. If characters disturb the vat, it becomes a large algoid and attacks (AC 5; MV 6"; HD 5; HP 25; *psionic blast* once per day — see DMG, p. 78). The algoid uses its *psionic blast* first, then it proceeds to beat the PCs with its fists (D/Att 1-10/1-10). The creature is immune to *fireballs*, lightning, and edged weapons with less than a +2 bonus. All blunt weapons do full damage. *Part water* and *lower water* spells do 1-6 points of damage each.

After the PCs search the room for 1 turn, they find one random item.

### Twenty random items

- 1) Wand of secret door and trap detection with 3 charges.
- 2) Clove of garlic (very smelly).
- 3) 4 silver-tipped darts.
- 4) A sprig of wolfsbane.
- 5) A bottle of green-dyed water (non-magical and harmless).
- 6) 3 unlit candles (when lit, each one will burn for 3 turns).
- 7) 16 gold pieces.
- 8) A 1944 FDR campaign button.
- 9) A chess pawn (jade) worth 10 gp.
- 10) An animal tooth.
- 11) A ring of protection +1.
- 12) A jar of paper paste.
- 13) 10 copper pieces.
- 14) 3 iron spikes and a hammer.
- 15) A paper note that reads, "You're getting warmer!"
- 16) A bronze, 1-foot-tall statuette of Demogorgon.
- 17) A paper note that reads, "You're getting colder!"

18) A 100 gp gem.

19) A tinderbox and flint.

20) A 50' coil of rope.

Roll 1d20 to determine the nature of a random item. When an item has been found, cross it off the list. If a subsequent roll calls for a deleted item, nothing is found (don't roll again).

### The Heart of Light

The stone at first appears to be a 3-inch-diameter glass "gem" of dull color and cheap value. Touching the gem has these effects:

1) The gem radiates light in a 60' radius, as a *continual light* spell, for one hour after each time it is touched.

2) A good character who touches the gem will have 2-8 HP of damage healed; an evil character will be shocked for 2-8 points of damage, and neutral characters will not be affected. The healing or damage will only affect a given character once per day.

3) After the gem is touched, *detect good* will reveal the gem's good alignment.

4) Any character who touches the gem will automatically know it is the Heart of Light; he also knows that the gem must be removed from the mansion and taken to Mekkari immediately.

5) And, when the "glass" illusion is dispelled by a touch, the Heart of Light is revealed as a 100,000 gp value diamond that would make the most jaded dwarf drool.

### Spell lists for tournament characters

#### Illusionists

First level: *change self*, *color spray*, *detect illusion*, *detect invisibility*, *light*, *wall of fog*.

Second level: *blindness*, *blur*, *detect magic*, *invisibility*.

Third level: *dispel illusion*, *paralyzation*.

#### Magic-users

First level: *burning hands*, *charm person*, *comprehend languages*, *detect magic*, *feather fall*, *hold portal*, *light*, *magic missile*, *read magic*, *sleep*.

Second level: *continual light*, *detect evil/good*, *detect invisibility*, *invisibility*, *knock*, *levitate*, *web*, *wizard lock*.

Third level: *clairvoyance*, *dispel magic*, *fireball*, *haste*, *slow*, *water breathing*.

Fourth level: *charm monster*, *dimension door*, *fear*, *remove curse*.

#### Clerics

First level: *bless*, *cure light wounds*, *detect evil/good*, *detect magic*, *light*, *protection from evil*, *remove fear*, *sanctuary*.

Second level: *chant*, *find traps*, *hold person*, *know alignment*, *resist fire*, *silence*, *15' radius*, *slow poison*, *spiritual hammer*.

Third level: *continual light*, *create food and water*, *dispel magic*, *locate object*, *remove curse*.

Fourth level: *cure serious wounds*, *lower water*, *neutralize poison*, *protection from evil*, *15' radius*.

# The RPGA™ Network Player Ranking System

The details of this system for scoring AD&D tournaments first appeared in issue #11 of the POLYHEDRON™ Newszine. It attaches a numerical rating to each player's, or each team's, performance in a tournament, but at the same time leaves plenty of room for the judgment of the referee.

Here's how it goes: The referee gives each participant a score of 1 to 10 in each of eight basic categories and four "bonus point" areas, then multiplies the score by a modifier for that category, and totals all the modified scores to get the participant's final rating.

## Basic categories

**A. Reaching event objective:** Did the character/s accomplish the objective set down for them at the beginning of the event? (x1 0)

**B. Teamwork:** If this was a team event, did the players work in the best interest of their team? (x8)

**C. Role playing:** Were the characters played the way they should have been role-played (with respect to class, character intent, alignment, race, etc.)? (x7)

**D. Rule knowledge:** Did the player/s display an exceptional knowledge of the game rules? Subtract from this score for repeated attempts to "referee" the event themselves. (x6)

**E. Character/s survived:** Score within the 1-10 range based on remaining hit points of character/party; 10 = no hits taken; 5 = half of hit points taken; etc. (x5)

**F. Reaching secondary objective:** Did the character/s accomplish any alternate objectives set down for them at the beginning of the event? (x4)

**G. Ingenuity:** Did the player/s come up with any creative or ingenious ideas that helped the party without distracting it from its purpose? (x3)

**H. Individual risk taken:** Did the player's character assume any risks for the party? Subtract for any such actions taken needlessly or foolishly (x2)

## Bonus point areas

**1. Fun:** Was this group fun to play with? Would you like to run these players in a group again? (x2)

**2. Power abuse:** Did the party achieve its goals without using excessive, "heavier" magic, weaponry, or other resources? Subtract points for powers used in a wasteful or inefficient manner. (x1½)

**3. Treasure:** Was the treasure found by the party an important aspect in the event, or did it just weigh them down or waste their time? Score high for treasure found, if that was all or part of the party's objective, or for treasure that was found and used to accomplish the objective. (x1)

**4. Determination:** Should any extra points be given to this team or player for the determination and identification of magic items, runes, machines, etc.? Do not confuse this with the established goals of the event. (x½)

And yes, in case you players are wondering, there is a Judge Ranking System that goes along with this; see *The Ebon Stone* in next month's issue of DRAGON® Magazine for the second half of the package.

# Silverdawn\*

\*by Entertainment Concepts, Inc.

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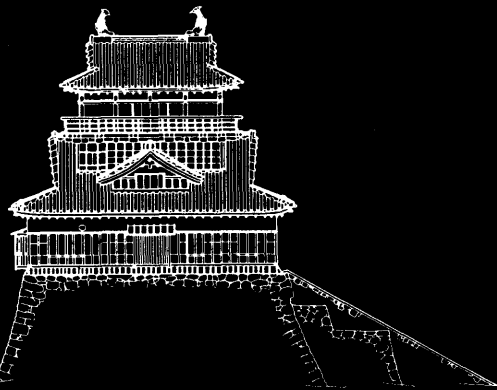
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HE DID NOT LOOK A GREAT deal like his poster-portrait, but only Petrie noticed that — or cared, once she had — and Petrie was odd by anyone's counting.

What mattered the most to everyone, Petrie included, was that he had come at last. Three weeks after his pictured announcements, here he was in town: the World Famous Kitemaster, Warlock of the Clouds, Advisor for the Crowned Heads of Exotic Realms (both earth-bound and clouddrilled), Master of the Winds. To Petrie, this last title was by far the most important. Oddly, not even she wondered why such an exalted personage should waste his time and fabulous powers awebinding the residents of Tailie's Landing.

As a ward of the Orphanage of St. Dudley, Petrie sat in a designated area of the tent with her fellow orphans and Sister Ignacia Marie. Maintaining her continued presence with rigid stillness, Petrie stared at the Kitemaster as if her huge purple eyes were velvet-lined cages in which she would keep him for herself, forever.

He was tall, though not so tall as his picture had promised, and slender to the edge of emaciation. His hair and beard were curly, but the red-brown curls of the poster were, in reality, more than merely speckled with grey. He was dressed in a blue-and-white pin-striped tuxedo. His shirt was only three snowy ruffs: one at each wrist and a larger one, pinned with a bluestone brooch, at his slender throat. The cape Petrie had hoped for was not immediately in evidence.

As he spread his arms wide, Petrie noticed that his fingers below the lace were long, slim, and callused by lightning. On the third finger of the left hand — on the side where Petrie sat — he wore a battered silver band.

Petrie held her breath as he gestured — barely more than a whisper-ripple of outstretched digits. The lanterns dimmed. The slightest, most delicate of breezes moved around the tent, feeling cool to sweaty bodies. Petrie sniffed as it touched her, smelled vanilla and ozone.

He crooked a finger and the little breeze, obedient as a puppydog, ran to him, swirled about his trouser legs for a moment, then stilled. Petrie imagined she could see it — a creature rather like a dog, if dogs were made of white feathers and ice — curled about the feet of the Kitemaster, grinning at the audience with canine good humor. The suggestion of a movement from the Master claimed Petrie's attention again, so she left the little breeze — unseen or not — to its own devices.

As the lantern light had dimmed even further, the audience drew in upon itself. The lantern to Petrie's left winked out, then its partner across the tent. One by one, with ritual solemnity, the lanterns extinguished themselves until the tent was in total darkness.

The Kitemaster allowed the darkness to remain only long enough for his audience to know fully that it was dark. Then he called into being — by means Petrie would have given much to have seen — a blaze of blue light. It hung in the air, seemingly solid, a foot or so

# Master of the Winds

by Sharon Lee

*Illustrations by Steve Swenston*

from the wooden planks of the rough stage and three long arm-lengths in front of its summoner.

He allowed the audience to marvel a moment, then gestured again. This time, a pillar of red light came into being next to the blue one. Petrie leaned forward in her seat as far as her wariness of Sister Ignacia allowed, then held her breath so the act of breathing might not disturb her sight.

The magician moved again — yes! The light formed tiny particles of color, smaller than bumblebees, but behaving very similarly. Gathering in upon themselves, the particles formed a pillar of light, this one butter yellow, floating beside its fellows on the stage.

Lowering his hands, the Master slowly moved back from his creations — Petrie thought that he moved carefully in order not to tread upon the breeze at his feet — and invited the audience to examine his servants until they tired of the sight. Petrie sighed. A long time would pass before she could look at the scene before her without some wonder, but free-floating pillars of color were not what she had longed to see. She leaned farther forward, straining to see through the purple fog that filled the space between the blue and red pillars, longing to know if the puppybreeze was still in its place on the floor. She yearned for *more*.

A hand gripped the back of her neck — a grip she knew all too well. Sister Ignacia, no slave to wonder, snatched Petrie out of her chair and marched her toward the back of the tent. Experience told Petrie it was useless and worse to struggle; however, as it became clear that the nun was intent upon setting her *outside* the tent, the child began to fight. Doom if sunlight entered this place now! Even the lingering rays of sunset were a danger. She did not question how she knew it, but the knowledge was plain in her.

Sister Ignacia simply exerted a bit more pressure, added a little more push. Petrie planted her feet, locked her knees, felt herself moved forward in spite of it, and then fell back upon the often overlooked weapon of a naturally silent child — she screamed.

Suddenly, a bitterly cold wind whirled into the tent, the canvas flaps snapping angrily back and forth against the tent's sides. This wind shook the very foundations of the entire structure as if it would collapse upon itself. Loose coats, empty chairs, and other items free from restraint flew across the inside, smacking against the wooden frame and cloth walls of the tent. Shouts of terror were voiced from frightened members of the audience.

As if stung by something cold, something fearsome, Sister Ignacia released her grip on Petrie. Taking advantage of the chaos, Petrie dove back toward the depths of the audience. Her attempt to hide proved successful, for she was swept up by the unruly people as they rushed blindly toward the sides of the tent in order to escape from the unknown menace.

Again, scream pierced scream as people felled people. Then, as if on cue, the previously extinguished lanterns flared back to life; the crowd paused in its flight, while members sought their individual bearings. But, from nowhere, another flailing wind

assaulted the panicky mob and herded it out of the tent.

Once outside, people continued to dart from the tent as if it were afire. Those unfortunate enough to be next to a certain exit route were forced to eddy around the unmoving black bulk of Sister Ignacia Marie. Still not quite sure what had happened, Sister Ignacia peered myopically about, hoping to find her charges.

**A**WAY, SHE'D GOTTEN AWAY AT LEAST, thought Petrie ruefully, nursing her torn palm. She'd be in hot water if she tried to go back to the orphanage now, though. Sister Ignacia would not be much amused by her misbehavior: from her scream to her determined elusiveness and lying willfulness that had closed her ears to the calls of the nun and her housemates. Petrie shook her head, closed her eyes briefly. Being here was more important.

After fleeing the ruckus of the show, Petrie wandered into a nearby farm. But the farmer's field did not contain the item of her search. Though she wasn't quite sure what it was she sought, she felt confident that she would find it.

Frustrated, Petrie decided to climb a large oak near an, old tool shed so she could get a better view of the surrounding land. Once up in the tree, Petrie planted herself down on a sturdy limb about seven feet from the ground. Surveying the fields before her; she spied what seemed to be a wagon in an adjacent glade, northwest of where she sat.

With mounting excitement, she began to clamber down the tree. In the process, however, Petrie missed her footing. Trying to grab another branch in order to secure herself, Petrie only managed to tear open the palm of her right hand and tumble to the ground. After landing on her hands and knees, she stood up slowly. When she assessed that her damaged palm was the only hurt she had incurred, she darted toward the glade, attempting to ignore the pain in her hand.

Once she entered the glade, she quickly found the Kitemaster's wagon. It now stood before her.

Seeing a light come on in the window of the wagon, she dropped behind a small bush.

The wagon door slid open, spilling light onto the steps and the grass below, and the Kitemaster stepped out and down. Purposefully, he strode forward until he was halfway between that square of light and Petrie's hiding place. He was dressed as he had been at the tent show, and the hoped-for cloak was now fastened about his throat, flung back behind his shoulders.

Stopping, he placed his hands on his hips and tipped his head to one side. "I am pleased that you were able to come here this evening," he said, seeming to address the entire clearing. "At least one has come at the risk of losing her home." He turned once slowly around and nodded as if satisfied. "I would like to invite you inside, if I may. There are refreshments." He tipped his head briefly to one side — such behavior reminded Petrie of the orphanage cat, which would tilt its head when it sensed that one of the orphans was speaking directly to it — nodded again, and turned

back toward the lighted square of the wagon door.

This was what she had come for! Petrie leapt up from behind her bush and ran after the Master. She caught him at the bottom step; yet, when he turned and smiled, she saw that she shared his attention with another.

But the Master did not allow time for more than that quick realization. With sure magician's timing, he bestowed his wonderful smile upon them both, murmured a welcome, turned, and led them up the stairs into the wagon.

Petrie followed the Master, keeping her eyes resolutely on the sweeping black cloak before her, refusing to acknowledge the other climbing beside her.

He motioned them toward his couch-bed as he moved to the kitchen of the small living quarters. Here, he gathered food and utensils. At last, Petrie turned unwillingly to her fellow petitioner.

He was older than she, tall and much too slender. The whiteness of his skin spoke of illness, and lank black hair was already threaded with white. His eyes were black and fierce, his hands clenched into fists at his sides. Petrie forced herself to meet his glare steadily, though something within her cringed from that con tact.

"Here you are, then." The Master's voice pulled them around to watch what he was doing. He set down a plate filled with cheese and bread, a pitcher of milk, and three yellow glasses. Relieved of these burdens, he reached slender hands to his throat, undid the fastening of the cloak, swirled it off his shoulders, and hung it on a hook on the wall by the bed. He gestured to them again, indicating that they should sit upon the blue-and-white coverlet.

After a moment, Petrie did. The boy remained standing for a heartbeat longer, then sat as well, far removed from Petrie. The Kitemaster sat on the floor by the laden table, his long legs crossed in front of him.

Smiling, he pushed the plate of cheese and bread forward. "Eat." He poured milk into glasses: one for Petrie, one for the boy, and one for himself which, when filled, he held in his hands and sipped from time and anon.

Petrie, remembering that her last meal had been the scant orphanage luncheon some hours ago and that her next meal time was by no means certain, helped herself to a slice of dark bread and a slab of butter-yellow cheese. She bit into it with satisfaction and a sigh.

The boy was staring at the plate as if he'd seen no such thing before. As well he might not, Petrie thought, suddenly noticing the fineness of his trousers, the softness of his shirt. Hesitantly, he put out one hand and selected a slice of bread. Copying Petrie imperfectly, he laid a piece of cheese carefully on the bread and bit into it. Chewing slowly, he neither sighed nor seemed especially satisfied.

Petrie took a swallow of milk. Though she tried not to bolt her food, she found it finished too soon. Regretfully, she picked up her glass, drank more milk, and set the empty glass upon the table. Much comforted,



she leaned into the corner of the couch, drawing her legs into a curl beneath her.

The Master moved, as he had not done all the time Petrie had been eating, and placed his glass down on the table with a small click. "Well, now. Would you like to tell me why you're here?"

Petrie blinked and looked thoughtfully at the Master. His taffy-colored eyes were warm and guileless. She felt a slow rise of the fine hairs

on her nape. Didn't he *know*?

But the boy was leaning forward, his thin, nob-knuckled hands clenching his nearly full glass in a grip that surely should have shattered it. "I'm here to learn the . . . the Power. I came because I could *feel* it. . . . Because I *want* it. To learn how to use it —"

"Ah." The Master nodded politely, then flicked his eyes to Petrie. "And you, child?"

Petrie licked her lips. Words were never easy; she preferred always to rely upon eyes, face, gestures. "I came because I . . . *needed* . . . to come. I . . ." She closed her eyes as if visualizing the words would make the speaking easier. "All my life I've loved the winds. I . . . I used to go outside in windstorms, just so I could stand and feel them rushing past, smell the different wind smells." She opened her eyes, looked into the Master's warm brown ones. "They lock me in now when the wind starts to blow."

"Oh, child . . ." Petrie felt his sorrow for her as clearly as if he'd reached out and touched her hair.

Blinking back unexpected tears, she tried to finish, though somewhat lamely, "And I wanted to see the puppybreeze again, if I could, sir. Perhaps touch it —"

Next to her, the dark, sickly boy snorted. "The puppybreeze," he mimicked, some of the fierceness of his eyes flickering in his voice. "That's the kind of power a *girl* would see! Why, that wind must have been the very least of those the Master commands!" The boy turned his black eyes to the quiet Master, demanding confirmation. "Isn't it so, sir? That that wind was the least?"

The Master knit his brows and bent his head. His long fingers were laced together across his legs. It seemed to Petrie that he studied the worn silver band on his left hand for a long time before he raised his head to answer the boy's question. "It is not for me to know what is least and what is greatest. I have my skills, my secrets, and those that do my bidding. But I am only Kitemaster, my son; I must judge worthiness as you do: in measures of loyalty and long service and — affection." Pausing for a moment, Petrie saw that his hands were no longer clasped and that one finger was rubbing the face of the silver band. "There are



those who serve me because they must. And, when the day comes that I am too old, when my will is no longer the stronger, those will turn on me — perhaps, even rend me — because I had dared enslave them in my youth and in my pride.” He looked at the dark-haired boy. “It never does to gain power by force, my son, though all who are powerful sooner or later must do so. It is better by far to command through love. A hate-filled servant is an unsheathed sword. . . .” He tipped his head to one side. “Do you understand what I have said to you?”

The boy nodded, replacing his still-full glass on the table with a stuttering thunk. “That the more powerful you are, the better you are able to hold strong servants.”

“Ah, did I say so?” murmured the Master, one eyebrow sliding upward toward his greying curls. Then a rueful smile touched a corner of his mouth. “Well, perhaps I did, at that.”

He looked at Petrie, his smile broadening and becoming less bitter. “So then, it is my understanding that the two of you would learn the ways and the whys of the winds, is that so?”

Petrie, unable to say anything over the thudding of her heart, nodded. Of course that was what she wanted — had wanted — for all her life. The truth of it resounded in the depths of her mind.

“Yes!” The intensity of that one spoken syllable caused Petrie to flinch back into the safety of her corner, for she realized now that she had made an affirmation that could not be retracted.

The Master nodded. “Very well, then. Class begins tomorrow evening. I will see you here when the sun goes down.” His eyes touched them both.

“Yes,” the boy repeated with much less intensity, then jumped up like an ineptly managed marionette. He avoided Petrie’s eyes altogether, executed a frail bow to the Master, and was out the wagon’s door in two strides of his long legs.

Slowly, Petrie uncurled from the safety of the couch corner, all the concerns of her real — her wind-less — life crowding back. How *will* I get back to St. Dudley’s? Mother Superior will *kill* —

“Petrie.”

Startled, she looked at the Master. Seated as he still was upon the floor, his brown eyes were level with her violet ones. For the second time in an hour, Petrie the Silent, Petrie the Wooden, blinked back tears.

“Sir?”

“Your hand wants attention, child. I should have seen to it before now, but —” He gestured toward the door, and Petrie nodded understanding. It was best, somehow, not to call attention to a hurt when *that* one was about.

The Master uncoiled himself, reached a hand down to her. Without pause, she slipped her own hand in his, slid from the bed to her feet, and allowed herself to be guided to the kitchen. Seated on a high stool, she patiently waited as the torn palm was washed, sprinkled with dried medicinal leaves, and bandaged with a clean white cloth.

“Thank you.” Fearing the tears would show for yet a third time, she slid off the stool, not daring to look up at him. To have a hurt looked after with such care! She took a step toward the door.

“Petrie.” Again her name, though she had not told it to him.

She turned. “Yes?”

“Where will you go? The orphanage is closed to you now, isn’t that so?” The Master stood where she had left him, making no move toward her. The expression of concern on his young-old face wrung her heart.

“I don’t know. I — if I go back to St. Dudley’s, they won’t let me come here again. . . .”

“You must come back, Petrie. You must learn all you can learn of the ways of the winds. You must.”

Petrie took a step back toward him, feeling puzzled and concerned. “I must? But . . . there is the boy. . . .”

The Master smiled his bitter smile and shook his head till the reddish curls danced. “Authberk walks the left-hand pathway, Petrie. You and I walk the right. Since he has the Sight and the Talent, he has the right to demand my teaching. I cannot withhold it from him. As I have never trained such a one, however, I would not choose him as my successor.”

“Your? . . . But, sir!” Petrie took another step and another. Without realizing that she moved, she laid one hand upon a blue-and-white sleeve. “You’re not going to . . . die?”

This time he laughed and covered her hand with his. “Die? Not for some time, I should think. But it is a difficult trade. Many who have the Talent, who have even the Will, fall short of completing the study. There will be much time for learning what I have learned before the day when those I took in pride have the strength of will over me.”

Petrie frowned. “But what about . . . Authberk? If he has the right to demand your teaching —”

“I must test both of you. If both pass, I have the right to choose between the two of you and to direct Authberk to a Master who walks his own road. If either of you fails, I must perforce take the other to train, for it is time — nay, past time — for me to take an apprentice.”

“Why did you wait so long, then?” The words escaped her before she knew she would speak them, but the Kitemaster seemed to take no insult.

Instead, he shook his head and smiled his warm-taffy smile. “I could not find a student with the Sight, let alone the Talent or the Will.” He laughed and began to chant softly, “I looked for thee in far Cathay; I looked for thee in Rome; I searched for thee upon the Moon . . . And found thee at thy home.” He smiled again. “I had forgotten that if one is searching for greatness, one needs look in small, unlikely places.” Suddenly, he moved, laying aside the towel with which he had dried his hands. “You cannot return to the orphanage. You have no other place to go. Therefore, you shall stay here.”

Petrie blinked at him, feeling worthy of the stupidity the nuns claimed she possessed. “Here?”

“Here,” he affirmed, moving to the couch-bed,

laying back covers, and plumping pillows. He gestured, light gleaming off the dull silver of his ring. "You will sleep here." He gave one final thump to a pillow. "So, I" — he gestured again, indicating the floor athwart the door — "shall sleep there."

Petrie opened her mouth to protest. *She* sleep in a bed so luxurious and the *Master* sleep on the floor? He cut off her protest with a wave of one graceful hand. "Enough. For tonight and tomorrow, you are my honored guest. Should you prove to be acceptable as an apprentice, we will make permanent arrangements later." He bent by the couch-bed, pulling pillow, blanket, and comforter from a hidden storage area. Then he nodded at the bed and said, "Sleep well."

Petrie moved obediently, kicked off her shoes, lay down, and pulled the clean sheets over her. She heard the Master rustling linens over by the door, out of her sight. By the time he had put his bed to rights and moved over to the corner to extinguish the lamp, she was asleep. So, she did not feel him lay his hand upon her head or stroke her short golden hair.

**P**ETRIE AWOKE WHEN THE EARLY MORNING sunshine threaded through the door curtains and touched her face. She lay quietly for a moment, sorting out the previous night's memories. Then she turned cautiously from her back to her side to her stomach, peering around the edge of the pillow toward the door.

The Master was not on the rumpled pile of blankets. Instead, a small wind — a creature rather like a dog, if dogs were made of white feather and ice — was curled along a particularly soft mound of cloth. Petrie caught her breath and slid slowly from the bed to the floor, never taking her eyes from the reclining puppybreeze. Carefully she edged to the tumbled covers and lowered herself to the blanket.

Though the puppybreeze observed all of this with great interest, it made no move to leave or to attack. As Petrie sat and was at last still, the feathery tail thumped once, insubstantially.

As if it were an earthly dog, Petrie reached out her right hand and held her palm up, fingers slightly spread. The breeze thrust its cold, pointed nose into the center of her palm. In the depths of her mind, Petrie heard a deep, doggy sigh of satisfaction. Greatly daring, she moved her hand and rubbed the breeze behind one icy ear.

The door to the outside thumped open, admitting a roomful of pale sunshine. The Master, with arms laden and eyes smiling, entered.

"Good morning, child." He greeted her, stopping on the top step and looking down at Petrie and the puppybreeze. "Made a friend, I see. Well done. Now . . ." he looked around quizzically, and Petrie scrambled out of the way. The breeze stayed where it was, wagging its tail madly and grinning in canine glee. The Master bestowed a smile upon it and stepped over the rumpled blankets. The door shut itself behind him.

Moving to the couch-bed, the Master emptied his arms and began to sort through his bundles. "This is

for you, child, and this, and these. . . ." Petrie put out her hands to receive a shirt of pale green cloth, soft against her fingers, and a pair of darker green pants. A pair of sturdy boots completed the outfit. "And oranges for breakfast, fresh-ground coffee, and fresher rolls, and sweet butter . . ." The Master's voice drifted to a mumble as he gathered up the foodstuffs and moved to the kitchen. Petrie stood as one bespelled, holding her fine new clothes.

The Master was at her side again, laying a hand upon her shoulder. "Would you care to wash yourself and dress while I brew coffee and peel oranges? There is a shower stall around the other side of the wagon. Your new friend will guard you, if you like."

Petrie shook herself, looked up into his eyes. "These things . . ." She stammered to silence, forced herself to begin again. "What if I don't have the Will . . . or the Talent? What if I'm not fit to be. . . your apprentice? What if —"

The kind hand on her shoulder tightened; again perceiving it as a token of comfort, she again fought tears.

"Petrie. Listen to me, eh?" He waited for her nod. "Now. These *things*, as you call them, are freely given gifts. No reason exists why you should want for adequate clothing, especially since I have the means to provide you with better. It has little to do with whether or not you will pass the test. They are yours, whatever happens." He paused for a moment, brows pulling slightly together. "As to whether you have the Talent fear not. The wind that drove the crowd from the tent last evening — do you remember?" Again, he waited for her to nod, echoed the gesture himself. "Yes. That was not of my calling, Petrie. Nor had it the feel of a servant of the left-hand way. It was your wind, child, so do not fear you lack the Talent. The Will is harder to judge. That is why there must be a test." After he had lifted his hand from her shoulder, he reached in his pockets and pulled out a tortoise-shell comb, an ebony brush and a silver, rectangular mirror. "These are yours, as well. Go on now and have your shower. Breakfast will be ready when you return."

Petrie nodded. Clutching her gifts to her, she turned and followed the puppybreeze out the door and down the steps. At the bottom, she stood still, letting the thoughts race through her head until she could see the pattern they made. Then she forced her feet to move and went after the gamboling puppybreeze, which had run around the far end of the wagon to the shower stall on the other side.

**S**UNSET CAME QUICKLY, INDEED, FOR one used to days filled with chores and prayers. Petrie ate two meals with the Master and did such straightening and dusting as there was, much to the man's secret amusement. The rest of her time she spent outside in the sunshine. Within sight of the wagon at all times, she relaxed with the puppybreeze at her side.

"Stay in the vicinity of the wagon, child. They are looking for you in the town." He'd told her that at

breakfast, watching as she stuffed whole segments of oranges into her mouth at once. Petrie had not asked if the townfolk had noticed him buying clothes for a girl of about her height. He was Kitemaster; she assumed he would not make such a common blunder.

As she sat on a grassy rise a short distance from the wagon, she reconsidered this morning's conversation, while the puppybreeze seemingly slept with its head upon her knee. As Master of the Winds, he would know his own servants, surely, and would know whether he had called *her* wind. He would even know, through his studies, how a left-hand — an evil — wind must seem. Petrie frowned, her hand slowing in its gentle rubbing of the little breeze's ear. The pup sighed in its sleep. If it *had* been her wind, it did her little good. She did not know how she had called it to her. In event of such a test as the Master spoke of, a wind she did not know how to command was as useless as no wind at all.

The shadows were deepening toward sunset. The pup at her knees suddenly sprang up, flung itself skyward. She felt a cool breeze brush her cheek, smelled vanilla and ozone — she was alone.

A twig cracked in the brush at her back and she jumped to her feet, turning toward the noise. The brush cracked again and Authberk stepped into the clearing.

Petrie felt some measure of horror leaving her, to be replaced immediately by wariness, by something approaching fear.

He barely gave her a glance and pushed by, heading for the wagon. Fighting her revulsion, Petrie followed, caught up, kept pace. They reached the bottom stair together as the door opened. The Master stepped out, black cloak settling about his shoulders, and motioned them to stop.

"The lesson will be given outside this evening." He gestured, pacing down the steps as if he were performing the opening moves of a difficult sleight of hand. "Over there, I think."

Avoiding each other's eyes, Petrie and Authberk gave way and moved to the spot he indicated. The Master was with them in a moment, smiling at both. "First, you will learn the technique that enables a Master to remain centered in himself so that he does not lose his core of identity, no matter how strong the forces he fights." He looked first at Petrie with his stern brown eyes, then at Authberk. "In this or another study, this lesson is the most essential of all the lessons you will learn. Mastery of this skill depends upon Will more than Talent. Thus you learn that, in the reckoning of mages, Will alone is counted more dangerous than Talent. Talent backed by disciplined Will is a power that will give pause to any mage or master." He looked only at Authberk, now. "For there comes a day when even the strongest Will wavers. Do you understand me, my son?"

Authberk nodded; a fire shone deeply from within his dark eyes.

The Master sighed, then spread his arms wide, the cloak leaping back over his shoulders. In each open

palm, he held a gem: a red stone in the left hand, a blue one in the right. And the gems each gave off their own glittering light. "Boy, look you to the red stone. Do not take your eyes from it. Child —" But Petrie had already fixed her eyes on the blue gem, though the light from it hurt her head.

"This, then, is how it is done, my children. . . ." The Master's voice came from a long, long way, faded into the blue that was all around her, that permeated her. Floating in a warm sea of azure light, Petrie felt something enter her skull, enter even the depths of her mind where the truth was held. She felt the something enter that deep part of her and — twist. Petrie screamed, or tried to. Within the blue there was no sound.

Then it was gone, over. She stood on her two feet upon the grass, barely ten feet from the Master's wagon. She sensed the boy standing to her left. The Master himself stood before them, unsmiling, cloak concealing his hands.

"So" — he nodded — "let us sit. There will be refreshments, then a test." He turned to the swaying boy. "My son, you should know that this test will determine whether your studies with me can continue. There are three possible outcomes. One is that you alone will pass; in this case, you will become my apprentice and learn all that I can teach you. The second possibility is that you both will pass. In this instance, I will take responsibility for seeing that you are situated with a Master of kindred persuasion." He paused, the boy's fierce eyes never left his own. "The third possible outcome is that you will fail, my son. If that should happen, I will send you home. Before I do, however, I will ask you once again to look into a gemstone I have. When you do, the desire to envelop the Powers shall leave you. The Sight will remain as a source of delight to you only. I have found it less cruel that way." He reached out a hand. "Now do sit down, please."

Petrie followed that command; her legs suddenly felt rubbery. But the boy remained standing, hands clenched into fists at his sides. "And her? What if *she* fails?"

The Master tipped his head. "Much the same. However, since she has no home to return to, I shall take responsibility for finding her one. Is this satisfactory?"

The boy nodded jerkily. Then, as if his legs would no longer hold him, he collapsed onto the grass.

The Master turned toward the wagon. Through the open door came a tray laid with cheese and bread, orbited by three yellow glasses and a pitcher filled with milk. Petrie leaned forward, discerned a wind that reminded her of the picture of an octopus in the orphanage's bestiary.

The tray arrived and was laid between the three of them. After the milk was poured and handed around, the pitcher left with the tray. At a nod from the Master, the wind removed itself to the wagon. The Master sat cross-legged upon the grass.

"Eat."

This evening, however, Petrie had no appetite, so the meal was soon done. The Master caused the

octopus-wind to remove tray, pitcher and glasses. Then he stood, motioning Petrie and Authberk to do the same.

"Now the test. I will cause winds to come against you. You will not try to control them, only to withstand them." He took a step backward, and his cloak snapped back over his shoulders in a sudden gust. "It begins!"

Petrie saw the storm wind hurtling toward her from the Master's outflung hands. A lean, black-cat shape it was, open mouth showing teeth like icy rapiers. Petrie braced herself, felt the weight of it crash into her, rocked — and held. She barely had time to see the next one — was it in the form of an elephant from the bestiary? — before it hit her. The third she never saw at all.

In the end, all she could do under that onslaught was to retreat to the depths of herself and chant, unlike any prayer the nuns had ever taught her, "I am Petrie, I am Petrie. I am Petrie! I am —"

Windlessness. Petrie dared to open her eyes. The Master stood before her, cloak shrouding him, brown eyes smiling. With difficulty, she turned her head. Authberk hunkered down on the grass. There were tears on his white cheeks.

Petrie turned back to the Master, brows pulling together in amazement. "I . . . did *not* fail?"

"You did not," the Master affirmed.

"But . . . but I did nothing. I ran."

He shook his head, the smile in his eyes traveling to his lips. "You held."

Their eyes touched for a moment, then the Master broke contact and moved toward the boy.

"Authberk."

The boy looked up, then flinched back in what might have been terror. When the Master held up a comforting hand, Authberk hurled himself to his feet.

"No!" he cried. "I won't look! You can't make me forget! You won't take it away! I'm strong! I can call — look!"

Glancing at the sky to the north, Petrie heard it coming — a monstrous wind, black and nearly shapeless, its ravening mouth drooling sleet. The grass in the glade flattened out as it came, and the curtains in the wagon twisted and snapped. From inside the wagon came the sound of breaking glass.

Petrie cried out in horror, saw the Master leap in turn and catch the boy by both shoulders. Somehow, she heard the murmuring words over the wind's

approach, knew that Authberk's saving was now the Master's greatest responsibility. She glanced again at the wagon, saw the flicker of flames on the curtains. The oil lamp had broken!

Petrie cried out again, this time in anger. In the deep portion of herself, she heard the hunting cry of an ice-and-feather dog. Up high she saw the pup harrying the monster and nipping at its heels.

The monster flipped one careless limb. The pup spun over and over. Petrie threw up both her hands, heedless of the imitation of the Master, and called in the deep part of herself, demanding allies to drive off the enemy!

And they came. Petrie felt them rush past her. Saw the cat-wind — the one that the Master had first hurled at her — and the elephant-wind, and the others that must have tried the temper of her Will. Past her they rushed, leaving behind the smells of cinnamon, warm fur, and wet leaves. Up into the sky they went and had at the monster.

Hal ted and surrounded, the monster-wind flailed out, seeking to break free. The elephant-wind stopped that blow, and the cat-wind leaped in, teeth gleaming.

Petrie slammed her hands against her outer ears, but that did not cut off the death scream of the monster. It reverberated in the depths of her. Then, it was gone. The other winds drifted for a moment, then were gone, too.

Petrie shook her head. Suddenly remembering the burning curtains, she turned toward the wagon.

"That's taken care of. A little damage, mostly to the curtains. Nothing irreplaceable was lost. My thanks to you, child."

She turned toward the Master, blinking stupidly. They were alone. She put her hand to a head that suddenly felt far too heavy for her neck to support. "Authberk?"

The Master gestured. "He's on his way home. He remembers nothing."

Petrie frowned. "He *was* strong."

"Perhaps he was. But he had not the Will to withstand even two of the winds I sent him. He had no core of strength on which to build." The Master paused, bent his head, and considered the silver band. "Only weakness relies on power from without to accomplish its will." He looked up then and reached out his hand. Petrie slid her own into his.

"Let us go inside and sleep, child. Tomorrow we must travel."

¶





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# Labyrinth makes good as Haven's offspring

Can "Son of Haven" (actual title: *Secrets of the Labyrinth*) live up to the standards of its predecessor, the excellent *Free City of Haven*? Yes, with a few minor exceptions.

*Free City*, in case you don't remember, is the first of (eventually) three volumes from Gamelords, Ltd., that describe life in the big city. The volume creates much of the backdrop for Gamelords' *Thieves Guild*™ series. When it was published, *Free City of Haven* provided the most detailed city ever produced for role-playing, and since then it has become something of a classic in the field.

*Secrets of the Labyrinth* is the second "big city" volume. Like its predecessor, it is filled with the rampant punning that I've come to expect — if not demand — from Gamelords. Some of the best (or worst) puns in this volume include: a jailer named Turin Kheay, two burly fellows named Bick Dutkus and Smubba Bilth, and a mercenary commander called Eddetor ben Bova. In addition, you can stroll down to Marcus Neeman's warehouse or Honest John's Used Horse Stable, then have your fortune read by Myrddin, or even join the mercenary company of Bonorbenztreezyntzemintanods.

Besides puns, this volume contains an assortment of well-designed scenarios. Some are quite original; others are inspired re-makes of old themes. What, for example, do you do if you're inspecting a bottle at a junk dealer's when the bottle decides to look back at you? Or what if the three dwarven Boltar brothers — Arkin, Balkin, and Corvin — request your assistance in transporting their "mail-order" brides? And what happens if an elf approaches your party and asks for aid in preserving the Mithril Throne?

All of the scenarios in this volume are clever. A successful scheme will rely sometimes on force, but more often on bluff, counterplot, and illusion (both magical and mundane). Truth is often disguised in the real world, and Gamelords observes this rule in *Haven*. While playing some of these adventures, I remembered one of Errol Flynn's opening lines: "Believe only what you see — and then only half of that!"

Also in this volume, we get a close look at the operation of the Hand. Much detail is supplied, along with some material that just begs to be played, even though it's not given in scenario form. The contents neatly dovetail information in the first *Haven* module and *Thieves Guild* 4.

## Grumbles

*The Free City of Haven* (soon to be re-released as *Haven: The Free City*) is loose-leaf and three-hole punched. *Secrets of the Labyrinth*, however, is magazine-folded and stapled. If the new volume were used alone,

the magazine format wouldn't be a drawback. But when the volume is considered the sequel that it is, the new format is annoying. The page numbering scheme from the first volume is continued here, but there is no longer any convenient way to ensure that all the pages are in consecutive order, unless you slit the magazine and put the holes in it yourself. I've heard that the magazine format allowed Gamelords to shave the retail price. I may accept this change — I never like to pay more than I have to — but that doesn't mean I won't grumble about the inconvenience. Besides, looseleaf packaging lends itself to future revisions and additions far more easily than other formats.

Grumble number two: The material presented here often refers to other playing aids in the *Thieves Guild* series, but the player may not have those products. For example, the volume refers to tailing rules, the Master Council, and the origin of the Hand — all topics from *Thieves Guild* 4. It also refers to the sailing rules from *Thieves Guild* 6. The referenced products are indeed excellent playing aids, and it could be said that any self-respecting gamer should have them. Some don't, however, and I prefer to see all background for an adventure in the same volume. On the bright side, you can play all of the scenarios in *Secrets of the Labyrinth* without the reference material, and adding more background might have raised the price or caused other material to be excluded. So I guess I'll accept the situation, again, but I'll still grumble.

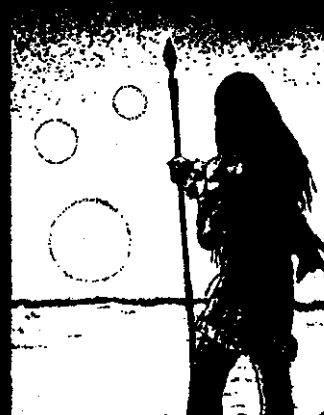
I have other complaints about the *Secrets of the Labyrinth*, though they are admittedly minor. Gamelords still has a proofing problem with the small section maps. For example, a road on map #11 disappears into the middle of a block on the neighboring map (map #5). A few inches above this error, the reverse occurs. But compared to the complaints about the format, this is nit-picking.

*Secrets of the Labyrinth* contains 80 pages of description and 10 pages of maps. The maps, 11 in all, are printed on heavy card stock. The product sells for \$12.95 (suggested retail).

Overall, *Secrets of the Labyrinth* is an excellent volume, as is its predecessor. The things I've complained about are perhaps analogous to being handed the title to a new car and complaining because it's a Ford instead of a Mercedes. I want perfection (or at least my idea of it). Yet, in an imperfect world, I guess I can't expect a perfect game aid. And until perfection comes along, I'll take the Haven products.

— Reviewed by Arlen P. Walker

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# FRP's gilded chestnuts

## The older they get, the better they become

Reviews by Ken Rolston

Why revise a classic game?

Some do it to keep up with the "state of the art." Others revise a game to correct problems found in the original. Revisions give old games new looks, and they can offer competition for new releases. The revision may expand and supplement its predecessor, or it may simplify and refine it. It can reach new buyers and provide a better value. Then again, a company may revise a game just to create new product — a crucial key to every game company's survival.

A gamer anticipates such revisions with ambivalence. On one hand, he looks forward to improvements and additions. But on the other, he questions the impact it will have on his current campaign, not to mention the dent it could make in his wallet. Will he have to revise the PCs and NPCs? The campaign background? Will his players need the revised materials, too? Will supplements for the earlier version still be available? And will the ones he already has become worthless?

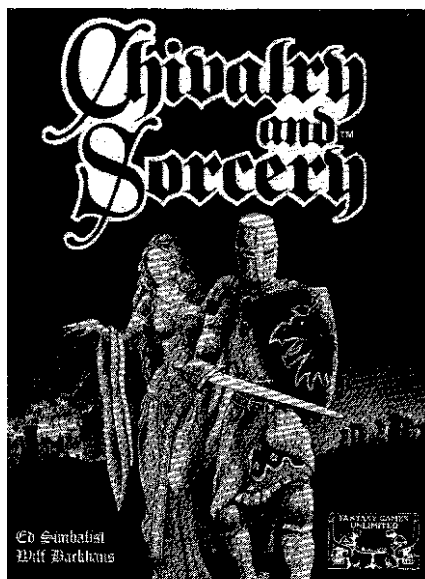
TSR has revised the DUNGEONS & DRAGONS® game, and Fantasy Games Unlimited has published a new version of its CHIVALRY AND SORCERY™ game. Soon Chaosium will release a new edition of the RUNEQUEST® game. These revisions show that FRP game design is far from stagnant; on the contrary, it's still evolving, and certain trends are evident:

- \* an increased emphasis on developed wilderness and campaign backgrounds, as opposed to dungeon adventures

- \* higher standards of presentation and editing

- \* a view of the gamemaster as a story teller and entertainer, instead of a competitive referee on the wargaming model.

The major challenge still facing FRP game designers is to reconcile the desire to create something that's both comprehensive and comprehensible. The more ambitious



the project, the more difficult it is to organize and present the game mechanics in an understandable fashion. The converse is usually true as well. The two games reviewed below illustrate the conflict these qualities can produce.

### CHIVALRY AND SORCERY™

New boxed edition, \$20

New supplements:

C&S Sourcebook, \$8

C&S Sourcebook 2, \$6.50

Swords & Sorcerers, \$6

*Chivalry and Sorcery* is a classic and comprehensive FRP game, rich in historical detail and chivalric romance. The game was revised to broaden its appeal, but the presentation still shows problems, and the audience is still limited, because of the bulk and detail involved. This game is committed to comprehensiveness, at the expense of comprehensibility

The new edition includes several changes. Some of the systems from the original version are gone. Others have been revised and moved to the supplements, notably the sections on fantasy miniatures warfare and designing outdoor adventures. And detailed character skills have been added to the section on character generation.

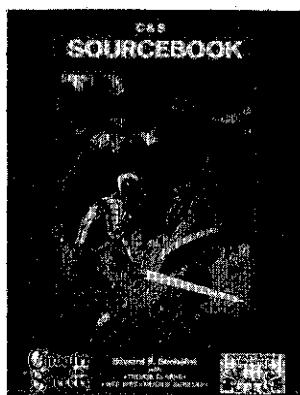
The revised C&S game is a boxed set containing three books and a character sheet. Book One includes essays on role-playing, gamemastering, and campaign design, but most of its 56 pages are devoted to character generation. Book Two, also 56 pages, contains the medieval campaign background systems, as well as clerical abilities and responsibilities. Tournament and individual combat systems are also included. Book Three contains the magic systems, plus profiles of demons, beasts, monsters, and NPCs.

C&S holds a legendary status in the hobby field; its reputation brands it as a complex and complete system for a sophisticated elite. Tiny print, convoluted presentation, and occasionally ambiguous rules made the original edition tough reading. On the other hand, the game offered realistic game systems and an excellent model for campaign play, both of which were far superior to anything the competition had put out. C&S set a gaming standard that was often admired, but seldom achieved.

FGU revised *Chivalry and Sorcery* to reflect the state of the art and address some presentational problems. Particularly, the company intended to create a version of the game that all gamers could use. The revision only partially meets the first two objectives. The third objective is unrealistic (and therefore unattained), considering the ambitious content of the game.

In the revised edition, C&S is still the most difficult and time-consuming FRP system on the market, when played at a level that fully exploits its virtues. Character creation is lengthy and involved, and the campaign-scale background is even more so. (Some improvements have been made in the first area, however, most significantly a larger section with model NPC statistics.) The game lacks a sample adventure — a standard inclusion in almost all state-of-the-art FRP games. This forces the GM to create an adventure from scratch, without a model. For players, creating a character and learning the basics calls for a significant effort; for the gamemaster, preparing a full-scale campaign and mastering the rules is a major project.

C&S still requires sophistication to learn and play, perhaps even more so now. For



example, the original sections on dungeon design are omitted from the new edition. This campaign chauvinism reflects C&S's elite audience; most of us entered the hobby as dungeon crawlers who later graduated to large-scale campaigns. Though I feel that dungeons may be a developmental stage in the growth of a FRP gamer, C&S implies that serious gamers just don't do that sort of thing.

In its attempt to broaden the game's audience, FGU has improved the presentation of the product to some degree, but it still falls short of current industry standards. Typographical errors, charts without titles or capsule explanations for their use, relatively few examples illustrating the applications of game systems — these are not the features of a state-of-the-art fantasy role-playing game. Other problems exist as well. It's difficult to reference the material; jargon and abbreviations are used in the text, but the game has no glossary, nor an index. Not one narrative example of combat is included. Most unfortunate is the lack of a procedural approach to character generation or melee and magical combat. A systematic structuring of these activities, reinforced by reference lists, repetition, and example, would make the systems easier to handle.

But even with all of its shortcomings, C&S continues to offer the most comprehensive and powerful FRP game mechanics, with superior detail, plausibility, and historical background. The powerful campaign design rules have no equal in the hobby. The magical and clerical systems are the most detailed and credible (modeled as they are on legend and history). You can adapt most of these systems to other FRP game campaigns, though they should be most effective in a full-scale C&S campaign.

Playability must be defined in terms of a game's audience. A comparison with the AD&D™ game, one of C&S's major competitors, may prove instructive. The AD&D game probably has the same amount of detail as C&S. Both games are equally difficult to master at sophisticated levels of play. In the AD&D game, systems are much simpler, and combat is more rapidly paced. But AD&D's campaign systems lack the coherence and realism of C&S's historically based models. Each member of the audience must determine which factors are most important to him.

Three new supplements for C&S are now available. The 72-page *C&S Sourcebook*, largest of the three, contains essays on monster design, economics, trade, and commerce. The material within also expands and revises the old sections on outdoor adventures and miniatures warfare. The 52-page *Sourcebook 2* contains miscellaneous systems for doors, locks, break-ins, etc., along with an unusual strategic warfare system using only paper and pencil for battlefield, siege, and naval engagements. Last but not least, the 36-page *Swords and Sorcerers* expands the C&S world with Viking, Mongol, and Celtic cultures.

*Swords and Sorcerers* is particularly impressive. Anyone using the Viking, Mongol, or Celtic culture in an FRP campaign would find this book worthwhile. Each culture is detailed in its personality, social background, and magical or fantasy aspects. Of all the C&S rule books and supplements, this one could be the most valuable and easily adapted to other systems.

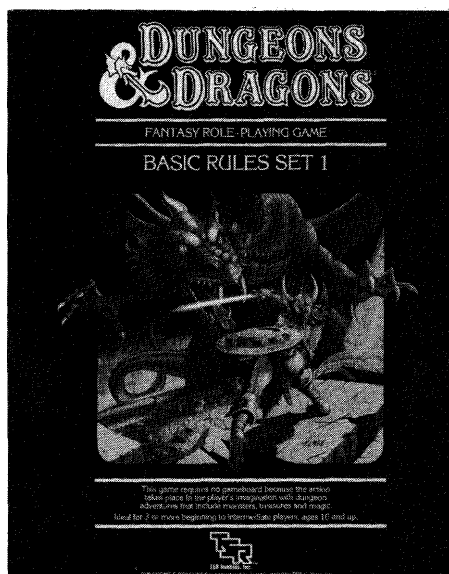
The *Sourcebook* also contains important information. In addition to the topics given above, it contains movement rules and major supplements on foresters, physicians, and healing. The miniatures rules make no reference to the role of magic on the battlefield — a serious omission for a fantasy miniatures system — but otherwise they're attractive, since C&S is the only major FRP game with an associated large-scale combat system.

Of the three supplements, *Sourcebook 2* is the least interesting. Except for the aforementioned strategic warfare section, it offers little of importance.

How might C&S have been improved? The designers could have sacrificed more

comprehensiveness for greater clarity. They could have focused more attention on making the systems easy to read and understand rather than powerful and inclusive. More systems could have been relegated to the supplements to make room for an example of a developed C&S adventure illustrating game systems and adventure design.

C&S is still the most demanding FRP game for an elite audience. What the material lacks in presentation, it makes up for with unsurpassed treatment of chivalry, sorcery, and the FRP campaign. No other FRP game approaches the power and detail of its systems. The essays on role-playing and gamemastering are required reading for enlightened FRP gamers and designers. This is the wrong product for the beginning or casual FRP gamer. For the intermediate gamer, it may be useful as a supplement and sourcebook. But as a complete campaign system, the virtues of C&S are only fully realized in the hands of the superior gamer — one who's serious, sophisticated, dedicated, and familiar with medieval history, legend, and fantasy literature.



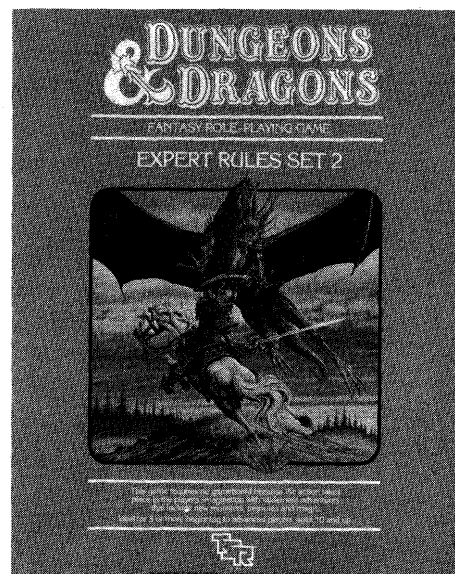
#### DUNGEONS & DRAGONS® game

*Basic Rules, Set 1, \$12*

*Expert Rules, Set 2, \$12*

The new D&D® Basic and D&D Expert Rules Sets are first-class revisions, improved in every way over their predecessors. With a more modest ambition than C&S, the revised D&D game succeeds better in achieving its well-focused goals, with substantial improvements in game design and presentation. The new Basic Rules set contains a Player's Manual, a Dungeon Master's Rulebook, polyhedral dice, and a dice marker. The new Expert Rules set contains the Expert Rulebook, an Expert module (*The Isle of Dread*), dice, and a marker.

Even though the old Basic and Expert sets were ostensibly revisions of the original three-booklet boxed D&D® game that kicked off the fantasy role-playing boom, I



had always suspected that they were just bait to get gamers involved with the ADVANCED D&D® game. With the publication of these two revised editions, I am beginning to see that the D&D game can really stand on its own, as a separate system perhaps even superior to the AD&D system. As well as satisfying the dictum that "fewer rules mean more fun," the revised D&D game's simplicity makes it more coherent and less ambiguous than its predecessor.

The D&D Basic game introduces the gamer to essential mechanics and dungeon adventuring. The Expert set offers additional mechanics and takes the gamer out of the dungeon, into wilderness and campaign adventure. This organization lets the designer focus on the beginner's immediate needs, introducing more sophisticated game concepts gradually.

Improvements in the presentation of these new editions stand out immediately,



particularly those in layout and illustration. Dramatic and skillfully executed artwork (a far cry from earlier illustrations) embellishes the material. And as soon as you begin reading, other improvements are evident.

The 64-page *Players Manual* in the Basic Set starts with fantasy adventure: a brief narrative scenario introduces the general game concepts. Before the player has even had to understand character generation, he has traveled through a programmed adventure that demonstrates and explains game mechanics in action. The gamer learns through action and example, rather than through rules reading — an ideal situation for an adventure game.

After this introduction, the gamer learns how to design a character. Character generation is organized as a procedure with a checklist. Only seven classes (cleric, fighter, thief, elf, magic-user, halfling, and dwarf) define characters in the revised edition. Character progression is still only covered to third level. Most of the rule changes balance or constrain PC powers: clerics have no spells at the first level; magic-users start with only two spells; elfen racial advantages are balanced by slow promotion. The rest of the book introduces several more game systems leavened by wise advice on how to succeed in dungeon adventuring and how to get along with other players.

The 48-page *Dungeon Masters Rulebook*, also part of the Basic Set, contains an introductory dungeon, partly organized as a programmed adventure and partly left to the DM as an exercise. Ten pages of procedures and rules are arranged alphabetically under 30 topics, which can later be referenced by index. Though many of the topics cover game mechanics, quite a few (like "Arguments" and "Complaints") offer practical and humane advice on handling common FRP problems. After familiar sections covering monsters and treasures, there is a short section on dungeon design, describing the features of a good dungeon and outlining several scenarios.

The Expert Rulebook is divided into two sections, one for the player and one for the DM. The player's section offers new rules, equipment, and advice for wilderness adventuring, as well as advancement charts and spells for higher-level characters. Some changes have been made in spell lists and powers, mostly to correct original oversights. The Dungeon Master's section contains additional rules, monsters, and treasures, but most significantly, it also contains a sample FRP campaign setting, complete with hometown, local, and large-scale maps, plus brief notes on human and non-human societies, politics, commerce, and travel. Also included are twelve scenario ideas set in the sample campaign background. The scenarios reflect a broad range of FRP gaming styles.

The Expert module, *Isle of Dread*, provides a good FRP wilderness adventure, with plausible native societies, geographical obstacles, and not-too-terribly implausible

monsters. The action style resembles the old "lost continent" movies, with natives, monsters, volcanoes, and abandoned temples of maleficent gods. The maps and player materials are abundant and well-rendered, and a number of alternate scenarios for the module's setting are suggested. The motivations and external relations of the indigenous intelligent races are not delineated well. In addition, some of the encounters seem a bit contrived, and the package is more a collection of encounters than a coherent wilderness expedition. Still, the module provides a varied wilderness setting for fantasy daredevils, and there is plenty of room for DM improvisation and scenario development.

The new D&D Basic Set is extremely well presented, written in a simple, clear style. It's full of examples and organized for easy understanding, requiring a minimum of time and effort to play. It emphasizes the dungeon-crawling style of FRP gaming. Sophisticated gamers and designers have turned their backs in scorn of this "gauche" FRP style, but it is the simple, unsophisticated amusement that originally drew most of us to the hobby. Dungeons, are initially simpler for the gamemaster; obligations of realism and logic can paralyze improvisation and inspired frivolity.

The D&D Expert Set is equally well presented, and it's a little more sophisticated. The Expert rules offer progression to coherent, plausible campaign backgrounds, and they provide an excellent example for the use and emulation of the developing Dungeon Master.

Both of the revised sets are excellent. The systems are clearly stated and well organized for reading and reference. You can have a lot of fun with them, but they are neither detailed, realistic, complex, nor complete enough to satisfy many serious FRP gamers. They probably won't support a "high fantasy" campaign without considerable GM improvisation or additional supplements. And the magic systems will never be free from serious logic and self-consistency problems. However, the D&D Basic Set is an outstanding introduction to FRP action-adventure, and the D&D Expert Set is a more-than-respectable introduction and example for wilderness and campaign play. Many casual gamers will never need anything more than these sets.

## BUYER'S GUIDE

CHIVALRY & SORCERY™ is for historically-minded, ambitious, and serious gamers. Anyone who would be an expert in FRP games will find C&S required reading. For those who rank between beginners and dedicated experts, systems like the AD&D game and RUNEQUEST will still be more appropriate.

The D&D Basic Set is the clear choice over the competition for any beginner and casual gamer — a light entertainment potentially leading to increasing sophistication. The D&D Expert Set is a logical

follow-up purchase; enthusiastic gamers will exhaust Basic's three levels of progression in short order. Experienced gamers or veterans of other complex and well-supplemented systems will probably find both packages too elementary.

Both of these game revisions are sufficiently changed to be incompatible with the older editions, but in each case the improvements justify purchasing the new edition, and a minimum of revision will be needed to use the rules in an established campaign.

## CAPSULE REVIEWS

**STORMHAVEN** (Blade, \$12): GM adventure pack for role-playing in a modern setting, with prepared stats for Blade's *Mercenaries, Spies, and Private Eyes*™ and Hero Games' *Espionage*. Includes detailed floor plans, like those in *Citybook I*. 56-page GM book devoted primarily to personalities and room descriptions. Scenarios are bare outlines, requiring heavy GM prep or improvisation. 23 cardboard heroes. Good presentation. Better-developed scenarios would have increased the value.

**THE ARKHAM EVIL** (Theater of the Mind, Inc., \$8): A first-class *Call of Cthulhu* adventure campaign. A literate mystery, with distinctive settings, well-motivated and delineated NPCs, and insidious horrors. The central narrative is skillfully interwoven with dramatic subplots, resulting in a complicated and intriguing mystery-adventure. Undistinguished art and production should not detract from the value of a scenario from a small game company.

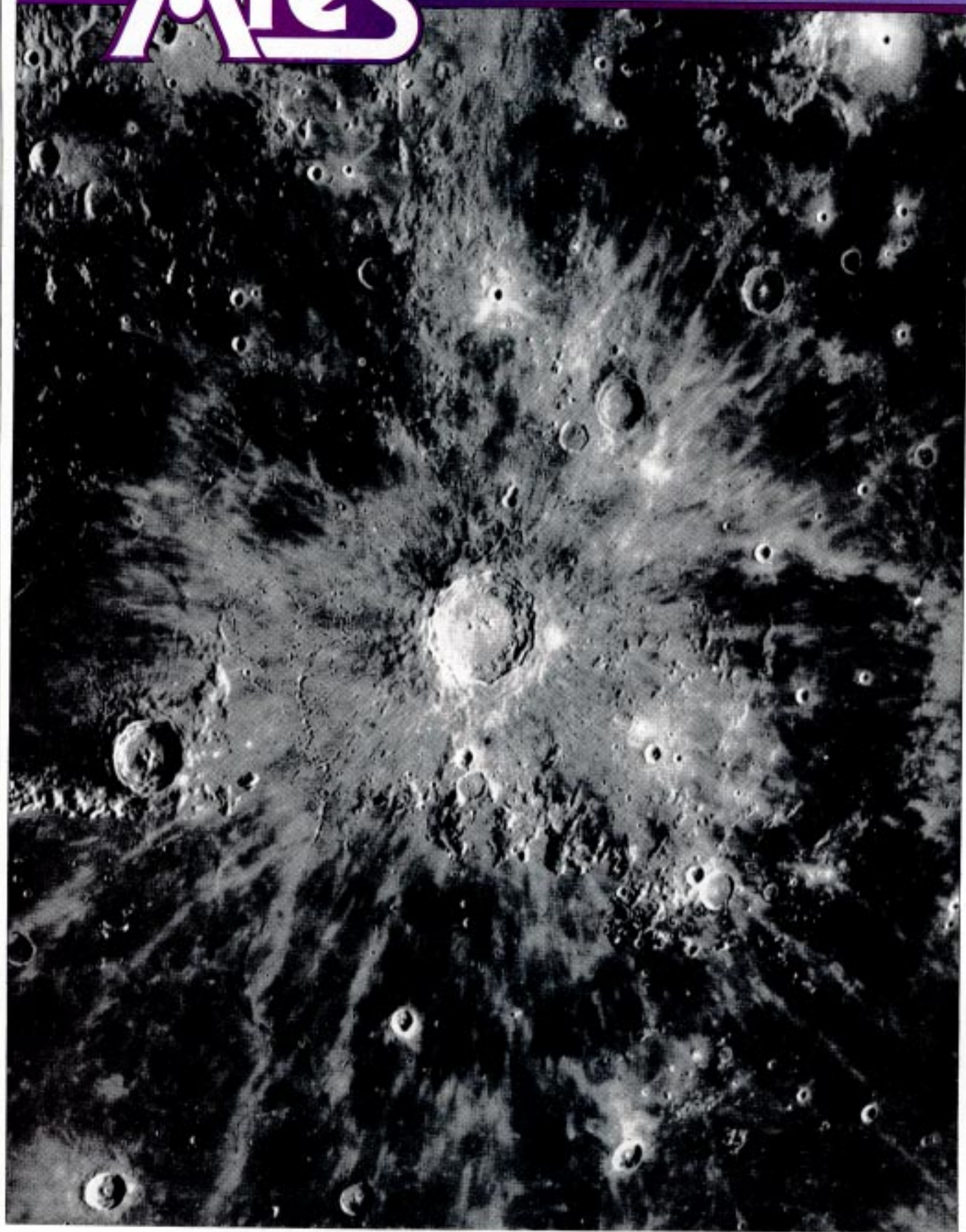
**MONSTER SQUASH** (Tri-Tac Games, Inc., Box 61, Madison Hts., MI 48071, \$1.50): Marvelous game, great fun, ridiculously cheap. Sort of a tabletop version of monsters miniatures warfare, only you design your monsters from modeling clay and mangle them during combat. Eight pages of rules. Simple, humorous, and gratifyingly primitive.

**TOWNS OF THE OUTLAND** (Midkemia Press, \$7.95): A 1981 release, Six populated FRP villages: a desert oasis, a smugglers' cove, a northern trading center, a tribal hill fort, a woodlands crossroads, and a mining camp. Plausible communities, distinctive personalities, good potential for role-playing and adventure. A model for FRP town and village design, and handy reference for quick scenario preparation or emergency improvisation.

**WEAPONS AND ASSASSINS** (Palladium, \$4.95): Inexpensive, well-illustrated introduction and reference to the Middle Eastern Order of Assassins, the Indian Thuggee cult, and the Japanese ninja. Traditions, techniques, and weapons. Useful as NPC and PC background for campaigns with assassin cults and guilds.

# Ares

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#### ON THE COVER

The giant lunar crater Copernicus, 95 km across and 3-4 km deep, stands out in this observatory photograph. In the future history of the SPACE OPERA™ game, Copernicus becomes the home for a major lunar colony and industrial complex. Photograph courtesy of Yerkes Observatory.

Welcome to the ARES™ science-fiction gaming section. Starting with this issue of DRAGON® Magazine, we continue our coverage of science-fiction role-playing and boardgames; every month we'll have the best articles from game experts and you, our readers. Our editorial direction is unchanged from our former magazine format, and we look forward to continued feedback from you on how and what we're doing.

The first of a special series of articles makes its appearance in this issue. The best-known world apart from our Earth is the Moon, our only natural satellite. How are the destinies of Earth and Moon intertwined? What does the future hold for us as the human race expands into outer space?

We contacted a number of game designers to help on a special project — to describe the Moon as an inhabited world, according to the future histories of the major SF role-playing games. On the next page begins Edward E. Simbalist's essay on Luna in the universe of the SPACE OPERA™ game. Stay tuned for other "points of view" in future issues.

Ed Greenwood offers a report on the Zethra, a new NPC alien race for use with the STAR FRONTIERS® rules. A mystery to Humans and Sathar alike, the Zethra travel through the Frontier Sector on missions of their own; only their unpredictability is predictable.

Our boardgaming feature, from Jerry Epperson, is a three-in-one package of variations on the STARFIRE™ game: simultaneous movement, advantage movement, and three-dimensional warfare. Role-players and boardgamers alike would do well to look this over for ideas they can apply to their own games and adventures.

Read on, and enjoy!

*My soul is in the sky:  
Tongue, lose thy light!  
Moon, take thy flight!*  
A Midsummer Night's Dream  
Act V, Scene I

— The editors

#### ARES™ Section 84 THE SCIENCE-FICTION GAMING SECTION

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# THE LUNAR HIGH REPUBLIC

The Moon in the SPACE OPERA™ game

©1984 Edward E. Steinbald

COURTESY OF YERKES OBSERVATORY

## Lunar statistics

StarSystem Coord	000/00 GSC 14.JJ/+000
Stellar Primary	G2V main sequence star
FTL Conversion	10,000 LS (light seconds)
Planets in System	10

## Luna's past

On July 20, 1969, as the result of a crash program by the old American NASA, Apollo 11 landed in Mare Tranquillitatis; two astronauts, Neil Armstrong and Edwin Aldrin, undertook the first manned lunar expedition. After five more landings, the national will of the USA to conduct manned operations beyond close earth orbit declined for several decades.

The Soviet Union established a secret military outpost at Tycho Crater in A.D. 2005; a NorthAm expedition landed shortly afterwards at Clavius Crater, hundreds of kilometers distant, to assault the Soviet bomb launcher on the eve of the Wet Firecracker War. Only 17 warheads were fired before the

linear magnetic accelerator was captured. The Battle of Tycho Crater, April 2, 2008, marks the entry of Terra into space warfare. It is also significant as the moment when Terrans accepted that their affairs were inextricably bound to the exploration and development of space.

Tycho soon expanded into a major military and scientific establishment, with 5,000 personnel by A.D. 2015. Mining operations commenced, while a new, more powerful magnetic launcher was completed to send raw materials to the L-5 colony construction sites.

The discovery of vast deposits of ice beneath the lunar surface made possible the colonization of the Terran moon as a "habitable" world. With an abundance of solar power, ice was made to yield oxygen in great quantities, with hydrogen produced as rocket fuel for deep space exploration. Most importantly, ice provided the water vital to hydroponic farms for

**The Rays of Tycho Crater dominate this lunar photograph.**



both Luna and the L-5 colonies. When L-5 *O'Neill* was completed in A.D. 2028, almost 60,000 people were living in Luna, 35,000 of them in Tycho City, a vast tunnel complex beneath the site of the original Soviet base.

Luna's attraction was considerable. The low gravity had a salutary effect on human physiology; the life expectancy of lunar colonists rose beyond 125 years. Degenerative diseases associated with aging in a high gravity field were almost unknown, and when encountered were of a minor nature. Heart ailments were a rarity. Aging seemed to slow drastically, and Luna exerted an appeal as a world granting eternal youth and vitality. Of course, prolonged periods in low gravity caused dramatic physical adaptations which made a high-gravity field like Terra's most uncomfortable for Lunarites, but the price was considered a small one to pay for the benefits gained from life on Luna.

The rise of the infamous Pure Earth Movement on Terra was a catastrophe for Luna. The space colonies were regarded as a luxury which could be ill afforded by the "poor and starving billions" of Terra. Transportation to Luna became a standard sentence for political dissidents, malcontents, and criminals. A flood of transportees swelled the lunar population to more than fourteen million by A.D. 2138.

Transportees and Free Citizens alike were brought under the increasingly harsh government of the Lunar Administration. Ever higher production quotas were imposed on lunar farmers, with savage penalties for failure to deliver the required grain at the launch head. The price paid for produce was held to crippling low levels, forcing farmers into ever-deepening debt to the Administration. By A.D. 2100, there was little difference between the lot of Free Citizens and that of convicted criminals.

The matter came to a violent conclusion on June 24, 2136, with the announcement of the frightful Air Tax by the Lunar Administration. Lunarites reacted with violent demonstrations; Admin "PeaceKeepers" intervened, and the population of Tycho City arose in general rebellion. News of the uprising spread to the other major colonies of Clavius, New Tokyo in Mare Imbrium, Copernicus, and Plato. By July 12, the Lunarites had eliminated the last vestiges of Terran control and had declared the Lunar High Republic.

Pure Earthian preparations to bring the rebels to heel were dramatically frustrated by the rebellion of the L-5 SkyCities

the following week. Also suffering under Terran repression and disinterest, the L-5 colonies "spaced" their Pure Earthian administrators and refused to provide the spacecraft required to transport a Terran expeditionary force. With no spacecraft built or based directly on Terra, and an administration which had dismantled its planetary spacecraft production facilities and technology, Terra was helpless to suppress the rebellion of the OutWorlds.

Free Luna prospered, becoming a haven for refugees from Pure Earthian repression. After the socio-dynamic collapse of Terra in A.D. 2165, the Lunar High Republic played a signal role in the reconstruction of the shattered planet, and has since provided vast quantities of food to Terra at premium prices. Most importantly, it became the center of OutWorld exploration and colonization.

### **Luna today**

Luna's vast shipyards and industrial complexes at Tycho City, New Tokyo, and Copernicus have outfitted numerous colonization expeditions, the bulk of the huge Solarian merchant marine, and the primary strength of the BattleFleets of the Terran Union and the Federation. A major naval base is located at Marius in Oceanus Procellarum (a AAAAAX5 star-base) and nine lesser bases exist as well (each AAAAAX class), each guarded by some 2,000 heavy planetary defense guns and over 1,700 startorpedo launchers.

Luna is also a major mercantile center, with eight major civilian starports (each AAAAAX class) and over fifty lesser starports (A to AAA class) at the main population and production centers. Some 5,800 interstellar corporations now maintain head offices and production facilities on Luna. A very respectable 158 starlines, from huge TransGalactic to the tiny independents, operate from New Tokyo, Copernicus, and Clavius, to span the vast reaches of the growing Federation.

The Lunar economy is one of the strongest in the Federation, with an average per capita income of CR 42,500 for a gross planetary product of MCR 10,625,000 per year. About MCR 2,000,000 is contributed annually toward Lunar and Federation defense. Free trade without tariffs is standard policy. Luna's chief exports include spacecraft, high-tech equipment, and foodstuffs. Imports include industrial and power metals and a variety of manufactured goods.

According to the census of A.D. 2583, the population has risen to 50,000,000 human citizens, and perhaps another 200,000,000 semi-permanent residents who are citizens of Terra and the other Solarian Outworlds. Some 7,000,000 non-humans also reside in Luna.

It should be noted that one lives "in" Luna, not "on" it. Though domed installations exist on the surface, all settlements are located largely underground in multi-level (and sometimes rambling) tunnel complexes. Seven cities with populations of more than 2.5 million are present: Tycho City, New Tokyo, Copernicus, Crisium, Clavius, Marius, and Aristarchus. Thirty-four cities with populations of more than 500,000 may be found, as well as 570 smaller centers. Most Lunarites are as at home on the surface as they are under it, with the majority owning vacuum suits for surface activities and as a precaution against blow-outs in the tunnels.

### **lunar government and laws**

The Constitution of the Lunar High Republic is based upon that of the old U.S.A. However, it provides inalienable protections for the rights and freedoms of the individual on an order unheard of in earlier states. Oppressed for decades by one of the most viciously authoritarian regimes in Terran history, the

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COMPLEXES.**

Lunarites laid down a code of conduct for government that amounts to a "hands off" policy with respect to most areas of human activity.

Each citizen is held to be "sovereign in his own right," fully answerable for his actions only when such actions endanger the rights and prerogatives of other citizens. Such laws as do exist confer authority to the government to intervene whenever the safety of the citizenry as a whole is threatened.

The universal belief is that the less government there is, the better. The principle followed is that of "user pay"; put in Lunarite terms, "If you want it, fellah, pick your own pocket!" At the same time, the ever-pragmatic Lunarite has no delusions about the cost of things, and he is prepared to pay the going rate for what he needs. His only objection is paying for anything he doesn't need or want. Suspicious of anything smelling of government bureaucracy or monopoly, he will prefer to do business with private interests, who invariably provide superior service for the credits spent because competition soon weeds out the inefficient and the unresponsive.

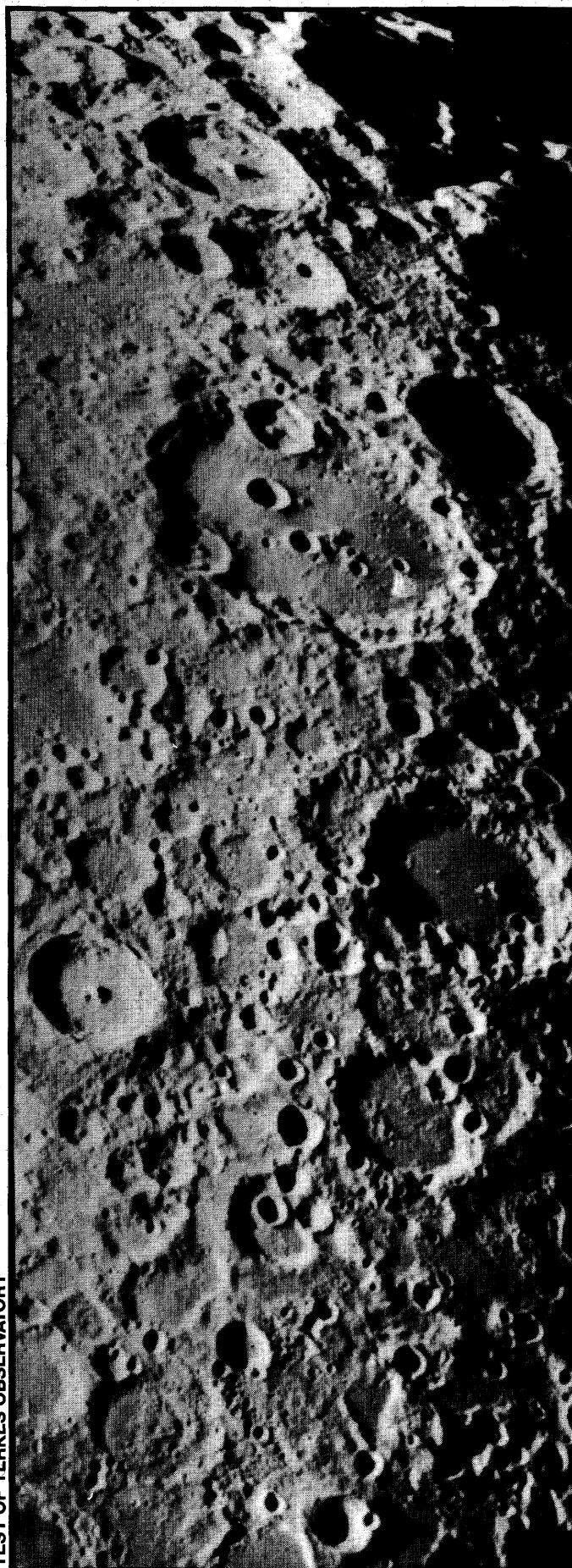
The regulation of business is left largely to "established custom," and a highly ethical code of business conduct has evolved. Sharp business practice is acceptable, but outright fraud and failure to perform on the terms of an agreement is guaranteed to bring disaster to the dishonest firm or individual. Good repute is essential to doing business. Once it is known that a person or company cannot be trusted, business will fall off to nothing in short order. Further, Lunar custom permits anyone convinced that he has been wronged to hold the individuals responsible to personal account. No one can hide behind the legal fiction of corporate action. If XYZ Corporation failed in its honorable duty, the officers of XYZ can expect to be "called out" if they do not set things straight.

The Lunarite always has the right to challenge anyone who has broken any of the numerous codes of behavior which arose during the penal period. It might seem that Lunar society is chaotic, with everyone free to do much as he likes in the absence of firm laws. Such is not the case at all. While a Lunarite is free, he is also obligated by honor and custom to respect the freedom and rights of others. Personal responsibility is absolute, even as personal freedom is exceedingly broad and unrestricted.

"Good manners" are essential in a world with its roots and its pride vested in its penal history. "Good manners" demand respectable and honorable conduct. The loudmouth, the dishonest man, the bully, the murderer, all may expect to be "spaced" through the nearest airlock to the surface or cut up with surgical precision in a duel with his victim or one of his victim's relatives or friends. Lesser offenses can result in a ruined reputation, hardly less disastrous in a society in which personal reputation really matters.

Lunarite "manners" extend to such fundamentals as honesty. The simple fact is that thieves do not exist on Luna. One can leave a valuable object in a public place and expect to see an advertisement in the "Found" column of the *Daily Lunatic*, the *Selene Gazette*, or any other newservice on the next day. Few thieves in Luna last long. The citizens are very skillful at operating air locks.

Wrongdoers may elect to go to "court" to settle matters — which involves both parties agreeing on binding arbitration by some individual they trust to make a fair decision. "Judging" is carried on by private citizens, and any Lunarite can set himself up as a "judge." For a pre-arranged fee, men of wise and honest reputation routinely hear cases brought before them, deciding matters quickly on the basis of the plain facts as any "reasonable" person sees them.



COURTESY OF YERKES OBSERVATORY

Tycho (left, center) and Clavius (upper center) craters

# LUNA IS THE PRODUCT OF THE "BOTANY BAY" POLICIES OF THE PURE EARTHIAN REGIME WHICH DOMINATED TERRAN POLITICS FROM A.D. 2065 TO 2167.

Justice is dispensed with equal dispatch. Legalisms and lawyers are regarded with general hostility, and proceedings are conducted with an informality that is sometimes frightening to those used to formal rules of due process. The "court" tolerates no attempt to impede its determination of the true facts. The reputation of the "judge" depends upon his fairness and ability to cut through the fog of claims and counterclaims. In Luna, reputation is everything if one wants to do business. Judging is a most respectable and profitable business, and Lunar justice is counted among the most honest and certain of any in the Federation.

## Lunar society

Visitors to Luna are advised to retain a "guide" — usually one of the many waifs who hang around the spaceports — to take them through the intricacies of the complex Lunar society. Until one learns the accepted modes of behavior, a "new chum" can easily get into trouble. At the same time, Lunarites are patient with tourists and newcomers, and may excuse conduct that would easily result in a duel if done by another Lunarite.

Luna is characterized by a degree of tolerance and diversity unequalled anywhere else. The population itself is a mixture of every racial, national, and religious group of humanity; their transportee ancestors came from every part of Terra. Inter-marriage has produced a people exhibiting the bloodlines of every racial group of humanity. Many non-humans now live on Luna as well, and they enjoy the benefits of a tolerant society in which they meet with no prejudice or difficulty.

Lunar culture is a melting pot, with words, manners, and values drawn from scores of Terran cultures and combined into a uniquely Lunar pattern of life. Marriage practices appear in every known Terran form. A number of new marriage systems evolved on Luna which answered the unique problems of a penal colony at one time woefully short of women and having no security for the family besides what it could provide for itself. Even some alien marriage customs exist among Lunarites. All are held to be most respectable, and a quick offense is taken at any criticism.

Women are held in very high regard, and one is advised to avoid any disrespectful conduct towards them. Children occupy, a special place and are watched over and protected by the adult population. Indeed, one soon gains the impression that Lunar society resembles a single extended family, with everyone involved with the welfare of all his fellows.

The family is the basic social unit. The usual family involves multiple marriage, with women holding a dominant, matriarchal position. This harkens back to the early penal period, when women were at a premium and several men had to share a single wife. Equally common, are group marriages, with a number of male and female spouses. Such marriages seem to offer the greatest degree of security, for the death of any one spouse does not shatter the family or disastrously reduce its ability to earn income or retain its resources.

The marriage relationships are genuine partnerships in most instances, with each adult member of the family having input into family decisions. In many multiple marriages, for instance, a new spouse is carefully selected for both personal and business qualities that will enhance the family, and the spouse will not be taken without universal approval.

The powerful family ties perhaps explain the Lunarites' refusal to accept much government intrusion into their private lives. With an average of seven adults in family groupings, citizens possess most of the human and financial resources to pay their own way. If they do encounter difficulty, their friends will step forward to help out until the family reestablishes itself.

This is not charity, but rather a loan between friends, and such assistance is invariably repaid with fair interest. Neighbors looking out for neighbors and pluralistic marriages are the ways that the Lunarites survived the Pure Earthian terror. They have not abandoned such admirable customs because they are the most effective survival techniques available in any society.

The preference to do most things oneself or to hire some private firm to provide needed services is the reason that few government agencies exist in Luna. The armed forces are composed entirely of Federation troops and are concerned with the defence of Luna from outside attack. There is a police force, maintained by voluntary public contribution, but it is small and performs only investigatory functions (though with great efficiency).

If manpower is needed, the police can count on finding large numbers of volunteer deputies. Since most Lunarites sign up for a tour of duty with the Federation Armed Forces (and often retain their equipment and light weapons upon discharge), tough and disciplined posses are the rule. In the event of a direct attack on Luna, they would also serve as volunteer militia — a tradition that originated during the penal period.

Above all, the Lunarite devotion to "orderly" (read "lawful") behavior is itself the best defense against crime, foreign espionage, and sabotage. Lunarites witnessing any dishonest act will raise an outcry, and everyone nearby will join in the apprehension of the wrongdoers. Lunarites take care of their own.

## Miscellaneous notes

The Lunarite proclivity for gambling is notorious throughout the galaxy. This, again, appears to be rooted in the penal days of the early colonies when everything was a gambling proposition. Accustomed to uncertainty and danger, Lunarites always figure the odds. They often show prescient powers by accepting risks that others would reject outright, and then succeeding in their ventures.

Gambling is in the blood of the true Lunarite, and one must take this into account whenever dealing with one. For instance, dicing for discounts on purchases (or added value, if one loses) is regarded as mandatory if one is expected to

patronize a business establishment again. And any form of "sporting proposition," be it racing, organized sports, or a street-corner pickup game of dice, will attract plenty of active participation from passers-by.

Visitors to Luna have the prospect of many unusual experiences. The world is disease-free — the result of thorough medical examination upon entry, a totally controlled environment, and the finest medical facilities in the Federation. Five interstellar universities have been established on Luna, each with superb medical facilities.

Lunar hotels are fully automated, with luxurious accommodations in even the modest, economy-class hostels. The cuisine is cosmopolitan in the fullest sense, with foods from a hundred worlds readily available. The population is friendly and helpful. The nightlife is varied, with entertainment drawn from the length and breadth of the Federation, guaranteed to satisfy any taste. Of course, Lunar gambling casinos are famous, and one can find his favorite game of chance at one or another establishment, however exotic and foreign the game might be.

In summary, Luna is the product of the "Botany Bay" policies of the Pure Earthian regime which dominated Terran politics from A.D. 2065 to 2167. The Lunar population is a mixture of all racial and cultural elements of humanity, and evidences a degree of toleration for difference perhaps unique in modern experience. Victims of brutal oppression and exploitation, the Lunarites are dedicated individualists who hold personal freedom paramount and resist any attempt to limit their personal choice and activities.

Yet Luna is a harsh and unforgiving world, and the Lunarites have learned to work together in a common cause. Whenever threatened, Lunarites submerge their individualism into an unshakeable group solidarity and will labor and fight for the survival of their neighbors and their way of life with great courage and self-sacrifice.

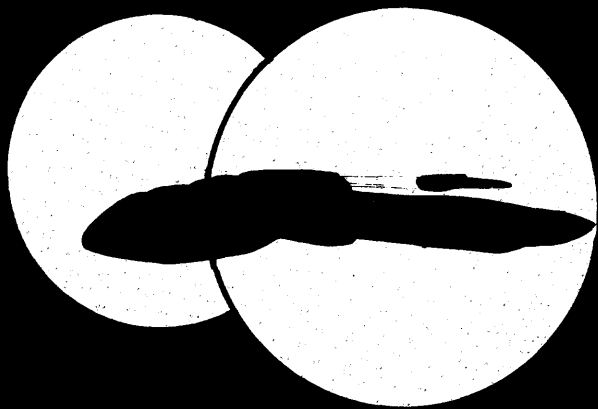
With such a committed social consciousness and sense of responsibility, one might expect Lunarites to be politically active, but the opposite is true. Politics is rarely on a Lunarite's mind. "Politics" is a matter of deciding what a problem is and who the best men are to solve the problem. The whole process is carried on at such an ad-hoc level that one wonders how anything ever gets done.

But, as noted, Lunarites are hard pragmatists and usually know the facts. That includes an awareness of the best men among them — ones who are both competent and trustworthy — and these are usually dragooned, kicking and screaming all the way, into doing what the community needs. In characteristic fashion, such leaders dispose of the matter as quickly as possible so that they can resign their posts and get back to their private lives and endeavors. Exercising power over others is distasteful to Lunarites, and will be avoided if possible.

Luna is one of the most highly developed planets in the Federation. The average level of education approaches the equivalent of a Master's degree at an elite university. Learning for the sake of learning is a basic Lunar virtue. Those less founded in the theoretical areas are invariably competent technicians or talented jacks-of-all-trades. Lunar economic success is directly related to Lunarite educational excellence.

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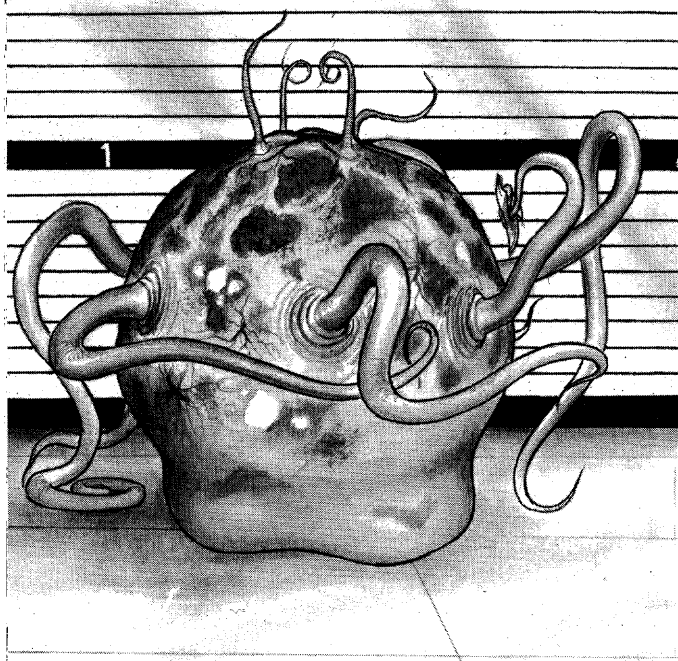
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# The Zethra

*An NPC race for the STARFRONTIERS® game*

by Ed Greenwood



## **From Pan-Galactic File 009887615AR211 Open:**

This report is filed upon completion of a preliminary study ordered when Agent 00969H "Quillanson" asserted that the beings Hhon of Prenglar, Stulta of Dramune, and Mlaqaq of Ruane's Star were common members of a single race. Questioning of these individuals, and the beings Urluth and Vrendu of Cassidine, has yielded little information, save that all, though they have no detected regular intercommunication, think of themselves as Zethra, and originated on a single, unknown planet beyond the borders of the Frontier sector in the direction of the Xagy dust clouds.

As far as can be determined, the Zethra (the name is used in singular and plural forms) derived the theoretical knowledge of interstellar spacetravel mechanics, but lacked heavy metals with which to construct spacecraft (Ref: Security File Catalogue, "Zethra Briefings"). At length, they acquired a derelict space vessel, thought to be an abandoned Vrusk "Sarsk" explorer starship (Ref: Security File Catalogue, "Vrusk Explorations, Xagy Sector"), mastered its controls, science, and maintenance, and several hundred Zethra set out to explore surrounding space with it.

Information as to their precise route and adventures remains undisclosed, but the ship has apparently moved out of the sector, after leaving an unknown number of Zethra on various Frontier worlds. Such planetfalls seem to have been by choice, rather than by any military or colonization plan, but the intractable and enigmatic nature of the Zethra has

thus far limited the information gathered on this possibly dangerous race. Agents are warned that the Zethra themselves constantly gather information, possibly for future military use, and news of a sensitive nature should on no account be allowed to reach them.

Agents are also warned to beware the personal powers of such individuals when encountered — an excerpt from a report filed by Agent 00616Y "Umbryl," ordered to question Urluth of Cassidine, is appended:

"The alien was initially approached by Agent 00982H 'Samber' and a recording robot 00151R 'Tencode' Level 5 modified Security Type, and it seemed intrigued. It accompanied them to Brazil's Hubstar Saloon, but upon seeing the follow-up guard take position behind it — two Vrusk, four Humans and a Dralasite, all field agents of some experience and good reports — the alien grasped both Agent 00982H and the robot and appeared to shock them with such force that the Human agent collapsed and the robot went haywire, dancing about jerkily on the spot.

"It then forestalled the guards attack by transmitting a jolt through the metal floorplates of the Hubstar's lobby that stunned all seven into unconsciousness. An electrostunner fired by myself from within the Hubstar appeared to do it no damage, and it touched the robot again. The robot spoke, obviously to me and at the command or instigation of the alien: 'Don't try this again. I go now. Do not follow.' Contact with my superior, Agent 00812D 'Asimit,' resulted in orders to do just that. Report concludes with film and robodata. . . ."

## **Zethra**

### **Physical appearance and structure**

Zethra are rubbery, ball-like creatures with high elasticity and durability, possessing a number of tentacle-like appendages. Six of these are retractile, strong, dextrous arms, capable of manipulating both large, heavy objects and tiny, intricate controls or items; their length varies from 1-4 meters. These project from the body in a ring about its widest circumference. A ring or "crown" of four small (.5m long) sensory tentacles projects from one end of the ball, parallel to (but separated from) the ring of arms.

Zethra are a mottled greenish-gray with a few orange patches, but they can alter the pigmentation of their skin cells by rearranging internal supplies of chemical substances, to blend with their surroundings. Although they are able to match all color hues exactly, they cannot alter their low reflectivity or the soft texture of their skin, and so cannot gleam or become rigid.

Of the five major spacefaring races, Zethra most closely resemble Dralasites internally, due to the amorphous nature of their body parts. A Zethra's brain is located beneath its

crown; feelers from the brain's green, oval mass extend down throughout the rest of the body like countless tiny threads, directing body activities and supplying necessary energy. Energy storage nodes, resembling star-like clusters of green threads, are located about a Zethra's body. They can be moved by the brain to avoid loss, if particular body areas are threatened or injured. Zethra move by rippling and rolling their ball-like bodies, pushing themselves along, or pulling at their surroundings for propulsion.

Zethra are hermaphroditic. They mate by tentacle contact, and one or both partners may give birth by budding. A "bud" grows in a bubble-like shape from the skin wall of the parent, until at length it breaks free to become a miniature, independent, and fully capable Zethra.

#### **Particular information on Zethra:**

Average size: 1.5m diameter

Average mass: 60 kg

Average lifespan: unknown; thought to be 400+ years

Reproduction: hermaphroditic, budding

Body temperature: 34 C; wide tolerance of changes in environmental temperature

#### **Senses**

Zethra sense heat, light, and electrical energy, and can distinguish variations in the same with great sensitivity through their four "see-feelers," or "seefers" (as Humans call these organs). They can also sense vibrations and energy fluctuations through parts of their bodies, but entirely lack a sense of smell. Like Dralasites, they also lack the ability to see or appreciate colors, detecting them only as differences in shade.

#### **Speech**

Zethra have no audible speech, instead using a rapid, complex language of electrical energy pulses with which they communicate with other Zethra through any good conductor (e.g., ferrous metals), or through direct seefer contact. Zethra can communicate with Humans, Dralasites, Vrusk, and Yazirians through a code-like series of "clicks"; they "hear" sounds in return by sensing and interpreting air vibrations.

Zethra create "clicks" by silently tapping someone with a tentacle, or by banging on a surface with a held object. They may also pass electrical pulses or mild shocks through conductive materials (a painful form of communication!), or cause a machine to emit sounds by the use of electrical pulses. Any Zethra who has practiced with a polyvox can cause it to emit a message through the use of energy pulses. They appear to comprehend unfamiliar languages rapidly and with ease.

#### **Society and customs**

Zethra appear to be very self-interested and amoral. Rare in the extreme, they seem to lack any organized society or racial goals, although they will readily cooperate with their own or with other races for rewards. Zethra desire supplies of energy, or organic matter with which to produce it.

Zethra also like information, and appear fascinated by trivia from all races and planets: odd bits of poetry, music and lyrics, catch-phrases, rumors, and apparently inconsequential facts. Such information is used for personal enjoyment and to achieve some unknown goal or future scientific development, but they will divulge nothing of their personal plans or preferences. All information can be retained perfectly for later recall and use.

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The few Zethra encountered have readily joined Frontier life. As noted above, they appear to have come from a planet in an unidentified sector, spreading through space by using a derelict spacecraft built by Vrusk, which they found, studied, and then piloted by use of their special abilities. They do not appear to have had the materials necessary to construct their own spacecraft.

### Attitudes

Zethra are not allies of any particular race, and refuse to cooperate with either the Sathar or any UPF organization, such as the Star Law rangers, the Pan-Galactic Corporation, or the smaller interstellar companies. Their true feelings are difficult to identify, but they seem to get along with all creatures who do not hinder their activities. Zethra do not appear to understand humor on the part of any creature. Rarely offended by the words or deeds of others, they are commonly thought of as emotionless. They can, however, become the friends or enemies of individuals of other races.

### Special abilities

Zethra can, at will, consume organic matter and convert it to energy, using it for continued activity, healing, and rejuvenation. This is done by some inexplicable natural process which remains a mystery to Frontier scientists of all races, even after exhaustive physical and field examinations. Zethra can store such energy in internal battery-like organs, using or releasing it when necessary to move, think, act, manipulate items, or as a weapon against other creatures.

An adult Zethra can store 220-440 SEU in its body, and requires approximately 20 SEU daily for movement, thought,

and functional stability. Prolonged combat, complex mental effort, and the healing of injuries can double a Zethra's daily energy consumption. Zethra can heal minor wounds by resting in the normal fashion, or by expending energy (50 SEU will restore one lost hit point). This represents a return to body stability.

Lost limbs or body organs will regenerate very slowly; a tentacle, for instance, takes 3-6 months to be replaced, and a seefer 1-4 months. Given enough time and food, a Zethra can always rebuild itself so long as most of its brain and at least one "storage-star" cell cluster survives. It will patiently absorb all organic matter around it until able to regrow the damaged parts of its body.

It must be emphasized that Zethra can only absorb organic matter, and will convert it entirely to energy with few by-products. Different materials will, of course, yield different amounts of energy (live intelligent creatures seem to yield the most energy, per given amount of mass, though Zethra will refrain from "eating" companions or obviously intelligent beings unless such beings are enemies).

Zethra can also transmit energy by contact, with great precision, releasing up to their current total SEU, minus 25, in any turn. These pulses can activate or deactivate computers, security systems, and robots. The pulses will duplicate the effects of throwing the "on" switch, or of giving certain command words; they may also simply blast or jolt the machinery past the point of its safeguards. Unfamiliar equipment and large computers often cannot be knocked out in such a manner, but a Zethra can always cause a robot to malfunction by a discharge of 100+ SEU. A Zethra who is familiar with a scanner, security lock, or related device will not hesitate to disable it if it is so inclined, regardless of the wishes of other creatures.

A Zethra discharge is less potent than a beam weapon, doing 1d10 damage per 2 SEU expended. They can elect to put more energy into a given attack, so that a cornered Zethra could well slay half a dozen or more opponents. Zethra discharges must be by direct contact or through a metal conductor (which reduces damage by -2 points per meter of conductor separating Zethra and victim). A Zethra can expend 2 SEU to stun as an electrostunner does, but if a target appears to be protected by an anti-shock implant the Zethra may increase its next attack jolt to 14 SEU, sufficient to both overcome and destroy the implant. A gauss screen can stop a Zethra jolt, but will usually fail under repeated attacks; Zethra cannot burn out such a defense, but know their limited power supply.

Zethra are immune to all electrical and radiant energy (i.e., laser) attacks, and can drain a powerclip, belt-pack, or backpack at the rate of 10 SEU per turn. Laser, electrostunner, stunstick, and shock glove attacks all provide Zethra with energy, rather than damaging them. They absorb 10 SEU per turn given to them by the weapon attacks, conducting away what cannot be absorbed. Fire and sonic attacks do half-

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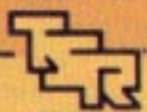
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***Zethra can tolerate a range of atmospheric pressures. . . and absorb any needed materials from surrounding gases through their skins.***

damage to them. Electrical creature attacks (such as those of the Rogue Crystals found on Voltturnus) do no damage, and are absorbed in the same way weapon attacks are. Physical attacks do full damage.

For example, if three Star Law marksmen with laser rifles shoot a Zethra with their dials set on 20 SEU, they would do no damage to it, but would instead give it 10 SEU of additional energy (the rest being channeled away). The Zethra could conduct the excess energy to the marksmen or another target through a metal floor, while engaging in some other activity.

Zethra can also serve as a power supply for beam weapons, defensive screens, and machinery wielded by themselves or others. Contacting the necessary powercords with the tips of their tentacle-like arms, they will often recharge the equipment of encountered strangers in return for food and gossip.

### **Experience**

A Zethra's perfect memory, inquiring mind, and reasoning intellect aid it in its understanding of the manufacture, handling, and repair of machinery and mechanical tools or aids. This ability is similar to a Vrusk's Comprehension, but is effective only in dealing with objects and mechanical thinking, not in social dealings. This allows a Zethra to add 1d10% chance of success to its success rate (in addition to its skill level) when using Technical Skills.

### **Zethra ability modifiers**

Zethra NPCs are created in the same manner as characters normally are, according to the STAR FRONTIERS® game rules. The base ability scores are altered by applying the following modifiers:

STR/STA: -5  
DEX/RS: +5  
INT/LOG: +5  
PER/LDR: -5

### **Zethra movement rates**

**Normal rolling (=walking):** 15 m/turn  
**"Scrambling" (=running):** 35 m/turn  
**Average movement** per hour: 6 km

Consider Zethra movement as "Slithering" for application of Terrain Effects.

### **Additional Data**

Zethra may use all tentacles with equal facility; they have no "handedness." They also lack a back side, and can move in any direction with equal ease, rarely losing control in weightless conditions.

Zethra cannot be stunned, but are otherwise affected by non-electrical beam weapons as noted above. They can bounce as effectively as other creatures leap, but are affected by wounding, falling, and explosives. Zethra swim at the same rate as the other races, but lose no stamina points until their current SEU is 40 or less (then they lose 5 STA per 30 minutes). Absorption of aquatic lifeforms will prevent SEU loss. Water transmits Zethra jolts poorly: -3 points of damage per 10 meters distance, but any creature within the jolt's effective radius in contact with the water cannot avoid damage.

Zethra can tolerate a range of atmospheric pressures (though not the vacuum of space) and absorb any needed materials from surrounding gases through their skins. They have no lungs, and don't require oxygen or other specific gases. They cannot drown unless drained of energy and imprisoned underwater with no food available.

Inert ("noble") gases do not yield the materials Zethra need, but they can tolerate them for short times. Poison, smoke, or doze grenades will not affect Zethra. Stimdose, Staydose, and power screens have normal effects on them, however.

Zethra cannot wear defensive suits, but can wear belts, with pouches, linked from the base of an arm around the curve of their bodies to the base of another arm. In this manner they can carry screens and other items. Some Zethra have ID cards issued by local authorities to keep track of their movements and activities, but Zethra have no distinctive Personalized Recognition Attribute (such as a fingerprint or voice pattern).

### **Referee notes**

The PSA of Zethra are always Technological. Zethra are always after more information, but their goals, plans, and feelings should remain a mystery to other races. If a Zethra befriends a player character, that PC can trust the Zethra not to make any hostile acts, but not to act in a consistent or "sane" manner; the PC may be attacked by space pirates and see his friend wander out into a laser crossfire to inquire of the new arrivals if they know any old songs, or have heard anything about so-and-so's daughter on the planet Kdikit.

Zethra seem very long-lived and know much of past Frontier events and machinery. A typical Zethra will have skill levels as follows: Melee Weapons 1, Thrown Weapons 2, Computer Skill 4, Robotics Skill 3, Technician Skill 6, Environmental 2.

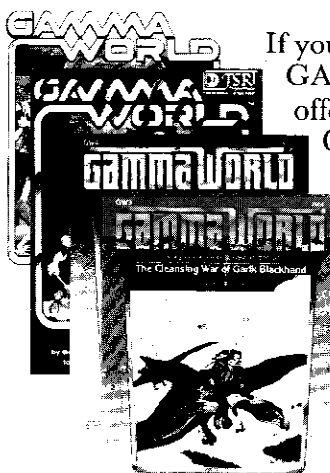
Zethra tend to prefer thrown weapons in combat if they cannot use their electrical discharges effectively. They always try to learn what they can of computers and robots (something local authorities are understandably reluctant to aid or allow, given the unknown aims and flexible loyalty of Zethra).

Naturally adept at Technician subskills, they are of necessity practiced in Environmental Skill. Two subskills here are automatically possessed by all Zethra, regardless of study or training: Analyzing Samples, and Making Tools/Weapons. Zethra often work as fences, barkeepers in spaceports, or as bodyguards to rich and adventuresome spacefaring individuals. Any position where new information is likely to be constantly forthcoming is preferred.

It must be emphasized that Zethra are rare, enigmatic, mysterious creatures. They must always be NPCs, but represent an independent force, rather than an enemy to other races like the Sathar. Zethra seem to like travel and adventure.



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# STARFIRE™ GAMING X3

## Three variations on space combat and movement

by Jerry Epperson

As the STARFIRE game system stands currently, players take turns moving their ships one hex at a time. Not only is this a long process (especially when a player is controlling several ships), but players can also forget which ships have already moved their one hex. Two solutions to this dilemma are presented here, as well as some suggestions for adding the third dimension to STARFIRE game combat.

### Simultaneous movement

Simultaneous movement and combat in STARFIRE gaming can be as natural as death and taxes. The only additional equipment players will need to utilize this variant is some extra paper for movement plotting. It should be noted that simultaneous plotting of fleet orders is used in the STARFIRE III: EMPIRES game supplement, but is not dealt with in this variant. Those who do not own the STARFIRE II game supplement should ignore references to Assault Movement and Fighters.

Prior to play, each player should list each ship in his fleet for the scenario across the top of his plotting sheet. This allows movement to be written, on a

turn-by-turn basis, directly underneath the appropriate ship. Once this is completed, players are ready to begin.

The sequence of play needs a little revision in order to work properly. The new sequence is:

**1. Plot phase:** The players record their ships' intended movement for this turn. Plotting is done with a series of numbers or letters. The movement order is executed in the order that the letters and numbers are listed. Forward movement, without facing changes, is represented by a number equal to the number of hexes moved through consecutively. A "0" represents wasting one movement point in the hex currently occupied. The letter "R" represents a facing change, one hexside to the right. An "L" represents a facing change of one hexside to the left. An "X" means that the ship expends all remaining movement points in the hex currently occupied, without a change of facing. When every ship has its movement plotted, the phase is over.

**2. Movement phase:** All ship movement is considered to be simultaneous, but all movement must adhere to the standard STARFIRE game rules (e.g. turn

modes must be obeyed, etc.) After all ship movement is completed, the phase is over.

**3. Combat phase:** Combat is resolved as per the normal STARFIRE game rules, with the exception that all battle results are applied *after* all ships have had the opportunity to fire. Some players may object, but this is in keeping with the spirit of simultaneous resolution; before play, decide which method you will use. Once all combat and damage has been applied to ships, the phase is over.

**4. Factor beam phase:** This phase is resolved simultaneously (or sequentially, as determined by the players before the game), but uses the same method as in the STARFIRE rules. The only item of note here is that the smaller of the two ships which are tractor-beamed together may not plot movement, but mirrors the movement of the larger ship during the movement phase.

**5. Assault movement phase:** This phase is resolved as per the STARFIRE II game rules (it's easier to do this sequentially than simultaneously, since fewer ships will usually be moved).

**6. Fighter attack phase:** This phase is resolved as per the STARFIRE II rules, but all effects occur simultaneously.

**7. Record-keeping phase:** This phase is resolved as per the STARFIRE game rules.

A few thoughts on the above system should be kept in mind. During the combat phase, since it is considered to be simultaneous, players are not required to tell their opponent when a ship's shields are "down," nor give any indication on damage or system losses on the ship until the round's end. In the same vein, a ship is not considered "destroyed" until the end of all combat. Fighter launches occur at the end of the Movement phase, and the fighters are placed on the board after all movement has been resolved. This means that the fighters may move in the Assault movement phase of the turn they were launched, but not the Movement phase. Fighter recovery is done at the end of the Movement phase (though both fighter and mothership must start the Movement phase in the same hex and follow the same movement route).

For example: "3R2L1" means that the ship will move straight for three hexes, turn right (remaining in the same hex), move two hexes straight in the new direction, turn left, and move one hex straight. "20L1X" signifies that the ship will move straight two hexes, expend a movement point in the final hex, turn left, move forward one hex and waste the remaining movement points in the

end hex. "RRX" would indicate that the ship was not going to move from the hex it began the turn in, but would make a facing change two hexsides to the right. The "X" is just a reminder that all movement is used up.

As an example of simultaneous combat, suppose the Terran destroyer *Patton* is locked in combat with the Khanate escorts *Falkn* and *Balkn* over Geralon.

*Patton* — DD1 (2) SSSAAIHFIWDIII (6)

*Falkn* — ES1 (2) SAIWIWII (4)

*Balkn* — ES2 (2) SAIWIWII (4)

All ships are at a range of two. Since combat is simultaneous, it makes no difference who fires first; the Khanate player chooses to administer his attacks. The range is much better for guns than missiles, so guns are fired at the destroyer. All four of the guns hit (each for 1 point of damage). The Terran player now fires at the *Falkn*, lacking multiplex tracking. The player elects to resolve his force beam attack first, scoring 3 hits. The gun attack does another point. At the end of the combat round:

*Patton* — xxxxAAIHFIWDIII

*Falkn* — xxxxiWII

*Balkn* — SAIWIWII

At this time, the Terran player tells the Khanate player that the *Patton* has "shields down" and, of course, the Khanate player tells the Terran player that the *Falkn* also has "shields down." Due to the simultaneous combat effects, it is well within the realm of reason to have ships waste fire by blasting helpless floating hulks. Players should keep this in mind when firing.

### Advantage movement

If simultaneous movement isn't your cup of tea, or you just hate the extra paperwork, the following variant might still speed up the movement phase without sacrificing the STARFIRE game system's simplicity. Rather than using the initiative phase to determine who moves or fires at what time, replace the phase with the Advantage determination phase.

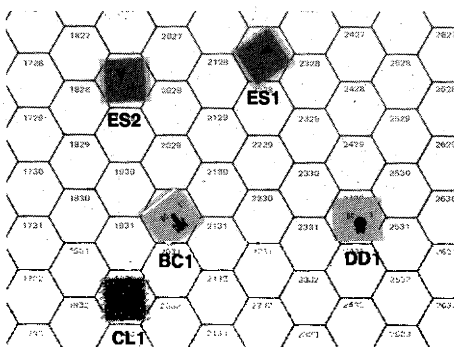
During the Advantage determination phase, players assign the follow classifications to each ship:

A ship is considered "advantaged" if it has an enemy ship in its 60-degree front facing arc, and the ship isn't in the enemy's 60-degree front facing arc.

A ship is considered "disadvantaged" if it is positioned in the 60-degree front facing arc of an enemy without having the same enemy in its 60-degree front facing arc.

A ship is considered "unadvantaged" if it meets neither of the two above classifications for being "advantaged" or "disadvantaged." A ship is also considered to be "unadvantaged" if it qualifies for *both* classifications.

The illustration below depicts ships from the various classifications.



In the above example only the Terran destroyer (DD1) and the Khanate light cruiser (CL1) have the *advantage*. The two Khanate escorts (ES1 and ES2) are *unadvantaged*. The Terran battlecruiser (BC1) is *disadvantaged*. It should be noted that BC1 is both *unadvantaged* and *disadvantaged*; in cases like this, the worst classification is used. ES1 would have been *advantaged* if the Terran's DD1 hadn't been able to cover it with the 60-degree firing arc.

During the Movement Phase, the order of ship movement would be: BC1, ES1 and ES2, then CL1 and DD1. For firing, the order is reversed.

During the movement phase, ships which are "disadvantaged" are moved first (expending all of their movement points). "Unadvantaged" ships are moved next (expending all of their movement points), finally the "advantaged" ships are moved (expending all of their movement points). If problems arise when deciding who moves before the other when several ships fall in the same class, a die can resolve the problem (high rolls go first, with ties rerolled).

During the Combat phase, all "advantaged" ships may fire first, followed immediately by "unadvantaged" and then "disadvantaged" ships. Use a die to resolve conflicts.

This movement variant reflects the importance of having the proper positioning on an opponent. Players will find that "dogfighting" will occur more when this variant is used than when using the normal STARFIRE game rules. A recommended option is "restricted Field of Fire" (12.6), though some players will find that these rules will make bad positioning hazardous enough as it is.

### 3-D movement

For those gamers with a warped sense of adventure, playing STARFIRE games with the added third dimension can be a



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lot of fun. Needless to say, adding the third dimension also increases the paperwork involved, but not proportionately greater than the enjoyment factor gained by the gamers.

Adding a "height" dimension is relatively simple, given the size of the hexes as opposed to the size of the ship. For all practical purposes, we can ignore such things as "blind spots" above and below a ship, and "angles of deflection." Thus, the only effects which will result from the "height" dimension are adjustments for movement and range.

Since range and movement are both units of measurement, both can be calculated the same. Obviously, one doesn't simply add the amount of distance traveled horizontally (represented by movement on the mapsheet) to the distance traveled vertically (kept track of on a slip of paper in either positive or negative movement points above or below the mapsheet). What is needed is the length of the hypotenuse formed from the right-triangle distances. The hypotenuse is equal to the square root of the sum of the two distances squared.

Rather than bore you with geometric equations, the table below shows the distances (in movement points) traveled. Simply find the horizontal distance traveled and cross-index it with the vertical distances traveled. The number shown at this cross-index is equal to the number of movement points actually expended.

To determine the distance between

two objects is a matter of subtraction. Determine the horizontal distance as per normal STARFIRE game rules, and find this number on the horizontal line of the chart. Next, subtract the lower elevation from the higher elevation. This number, can then be found on the vertical line of the chart. The cross-indexed numbers will yield the actual range between the two objects.

Players should consider the mapsheet as "0" elevation with an infinite number of elevations extending above and below the playing surface. For any scenarios which do not have height elevations listed, the following generation procedure may be used to locate objects on the vertical axis:

1. Ships which have not used a Warp Point to enter the map sheet just prior to the start of the scenario (not having "warped" into the mapped area), may start at any elevation between -20 and +20.

2. Ships entering the map through a Warp Point start at the same height elevation as the Warp Point.

3. Warp Points and Planets are randomly assigned a location on the vertical axis by rolling a six-sided die. If the result is odd, then the distance is less than zero. If it is even, then the distance is greater than zero. To find out how many elevations in the positive or negative direction the point is, roll three six-sided dice and note the result. If any of the dice have the same number of pips, they are rerolled and added to the origi-

nal result until such time as no "doubles" or "triples" are rolled.

4. Stars are always located at the "0" elevation.

5. Bases are deployed wherever the owning player wishes.

The use of three-dimensional tactics, such as attacks from above or below, demonstrates how fluid space combat should (or could) be. Improper usage of the "height" element can lead to destruction of a fleet. Players should be on the lookout for deceptive height differences. Objects which appear quite close on the mapsheet might actually be farther away than others on the same elevation a mapsheet apart! This variant also works very well with the simultaneous movement variant described previously. To denote a gain in elevation, use a "+"; if losing elevation, use a "-" sign. Each sign represents one level change.

### Parting shots

The above variants can be considered highly experimental. Although I have playtested each one of them, it is far easier to tell players face-to-face how things work than to actually apply pen to paper (or, in this case, fingers to typewriter), and write the rules to govern all actions within the parameters of the variant. If you have any questions concerning these variants, send them to me in care of this magazine. If you have discovered a better way of accomplishing the goal, write it up. Good articles are hard to come by.

## HYPOTENUSE DETERMINATION TABLE

### HORIZONTAL DIFFERENCE

	0 0	0 1	0 2	0 3	0 4	0 5	0 6	0 7	0 8	0 9	1 0	1 1	1 2	1 3	1 4	1 5	1 6	1 7	1 8	1 9	2 0		
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	0 3	03	03	04	04	05	06	07	08	09	09	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	
	0 4	04	04	04	04	05	06	06	07	08	09	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	
	0 5	05	05	05	06	06	07	08	09	09	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	-	
	0 6	06	06	06	06	07	07	08	09	10	11	12	13	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	-	
	0 7	07	07	07	07	08	08	09	09	10	11	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	17	18	19	20	-
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	1 4	14	14	14	14	14	15	15	15	16	16	17	17	18	18	19	20	-	-	-	-	-	
	1 5	15	15	15	15	15	16	16	16	17	17	17	18	19	19	20	-	-	-	-	-	-	
	1 6	16	16	16	16	16	16	17	17	17	18	18	19	19	20	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
	1 7	17	17	17	17	17	17	18	18	18	19	19	20	20	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
	1 8	18	18	18	18	18	18	19	19	19	20	20	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
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	2 0	20	20	20	20	20	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	

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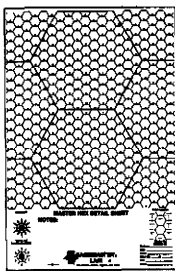


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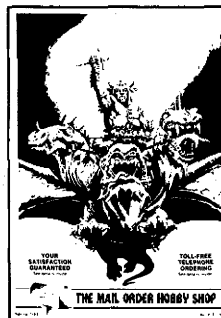
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# SNARFQUEST

#9 BY ELMORE

OH, YOU HAVE SAVED ME FROM THAT EVIL SUTHAZE... SNARF, I'M YOURS FOREVER.

YOU GOT DAT RIGHT, BABE.

COME ON, WE BETTER SPLIT NOW.

YEAH, IT SOUNDS LIKE OL' WILLIE IS BLASTING EVERYTHING.

SO THERE'S A SECRET PASSAGE BEHIND THIS BOOK CASE?

DID I TELL YOU DAT I'M GONNA BE KING TOO, AN' I'M GONNA BLAH BLAH BLAH IS THAT RIGHT?

YES... OH SNARF, WE COULD USE SOME HELP.

LATER

LOOKS LIKE NOBODY IS GUARDING DA FRONT DOOR.

SNARF... ARGH! PAY ATTENTION, WE'RE GONNA MAKE A RUN FOR IT, - YOU READY?

BORN READY!

HEEEYYY, MY MAN.

GO FOR IT!

OH SNARF... GASP... I MUST REST... PUFF... I'M NOT USED TO SO MUCH RUNNING.

HEY, WE MADE IT... OH, WOW!

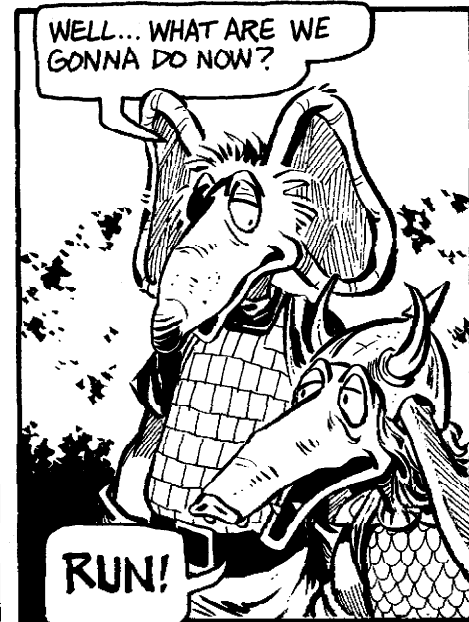
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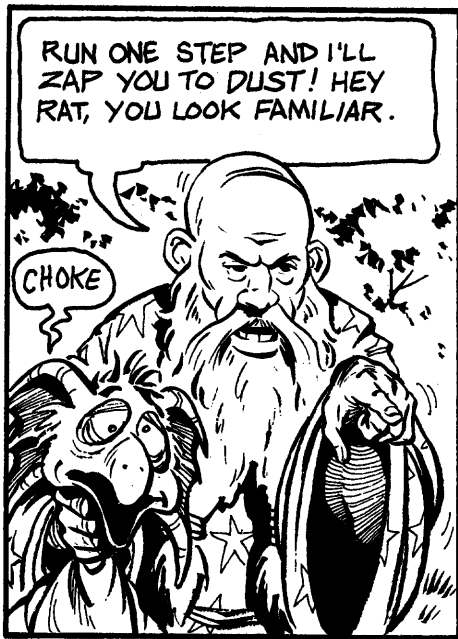
HOLD UP, YOU GUYS!

HERE! LET'S HIDE BEHIND DIS ROCK.

WE SHOULDN'T EVEN STOP.







RUN ONE STEP AND I'LL ZAP YOU TO DUST! HEY RAT, YOU LOOK FAMILIAR.

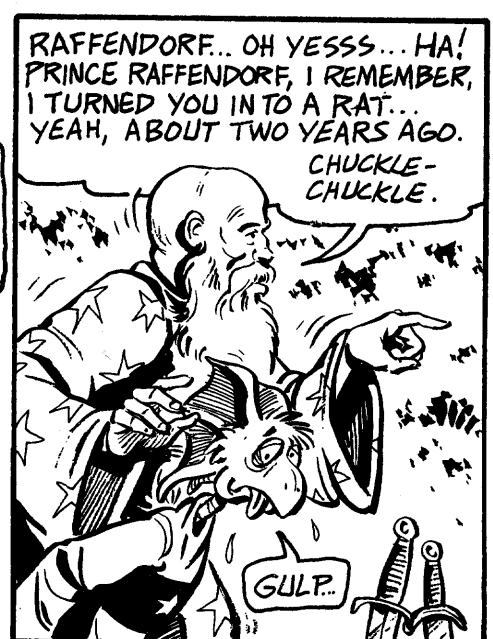
CHOKES



ME?... UHHH... HEY, I DON'T THINK WE... AH, HAVE MET...

HEY, IF YOU KNOW OL' RAFFENDORF, DEN I'LL LEAVE AN' LET YOU GUYS JUS' TALK... OK?

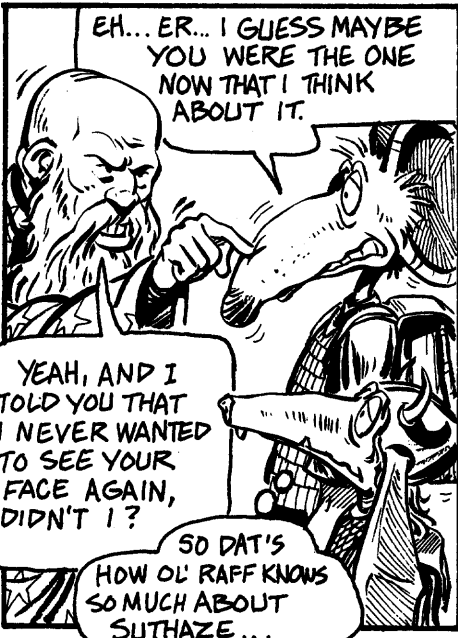
SHUT UP.



RAFFENDORF... OH YESSS... HA! PRINCE RAFFENDORF, I REMEMBER, I TURNED YOU INTO A RAT... YEAH, ABOUT TWO YEARS AGO.

CHUCKLE-CHUCKLE.

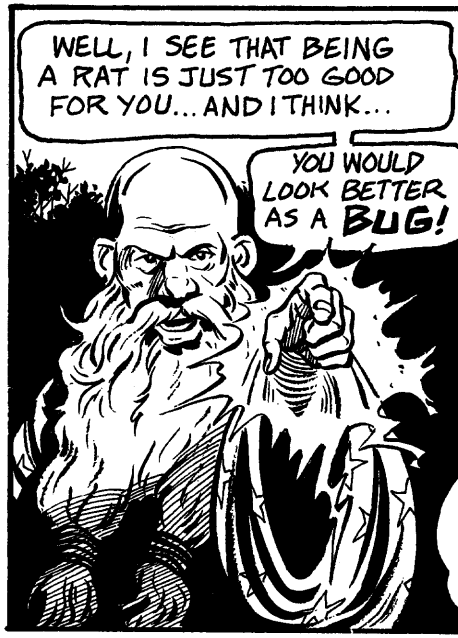
GULP...



EH... ER... I GUESS MAYBE YOU WERE THE ONE NOW THAT I THINK ABOUT IT.

YEAH, AND I TOLD YOU THAT I NEVER WANTED TO SEE YOUR FACE AGAIN, DIDN'T I?

SO DAT'S HOW OL' RAFF KNOWS SO MUCH ABOUT SUTHAZE...



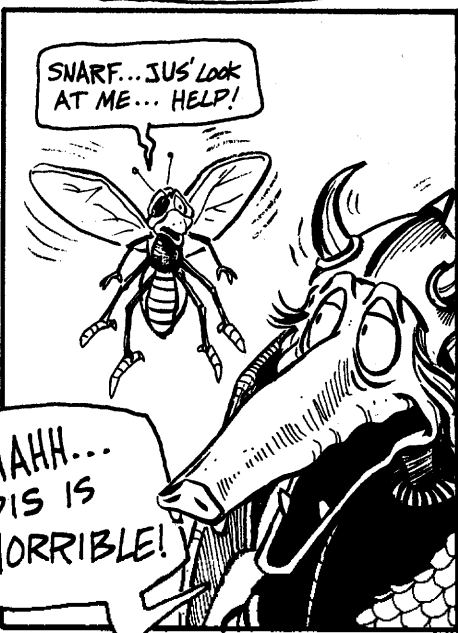
WELL, I SEE THAT BEING A RAT IS JUST TOO GOOD FOR YOU... AND I THINK...

YOU WOULD LOOK BETTER AS A **BUG!**



POOF!

YEEIIIEEE  
DIS DUDE IS OUT TA KILL US FER SURE... NOW WHERE DID I PUT DAT SECRET WEAPON!



SNARF... JUS' LOOK AT ME... HELP!

AAHH... DIS IS HORRIBLE!



NOW FOR YOU- YOU SNOUT HEAD, YOU WOULD LOOK GOOD AS A...

LOOK OUT, SNARF!

WHERE'S DAT SECRET WEAPON??



YAAA... I FOUND IT... SUTHAZE, I'M GONNA...?? DO... SOMETHIN' TO YA.

SNARF... HOLD DA OTHER END.

NEXT ISSUE: DOES SNARF SHOOT HIS FOOT OR DOES SUTHAZE TURN SNARF INTO A SLUG?



# HATWAY'S EWNAY?

- WITH PHIL AND DIXIE!

THAT'S A GOOD QUESTION-  
WHAT ARE WE TALKING ABOUT THIS MONTH?

HOW ABOUT SEX AND D & D?

BOY, YOU NEVER GIVE UP, DO YOU? HAVEN'T YOU GOTTEN THE IDEA YET? THE DRAGON WON'T LET US DO IT.

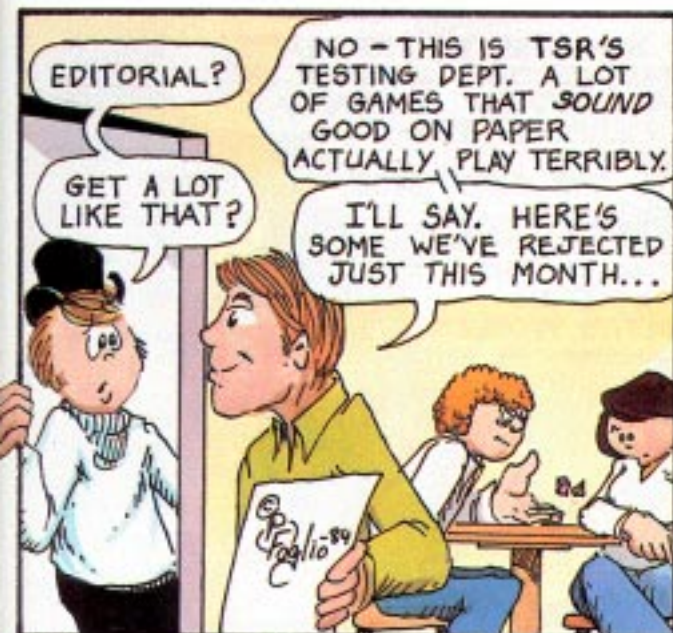
WHY NOT ?!

UM... WELL... I DON'T KNOW.

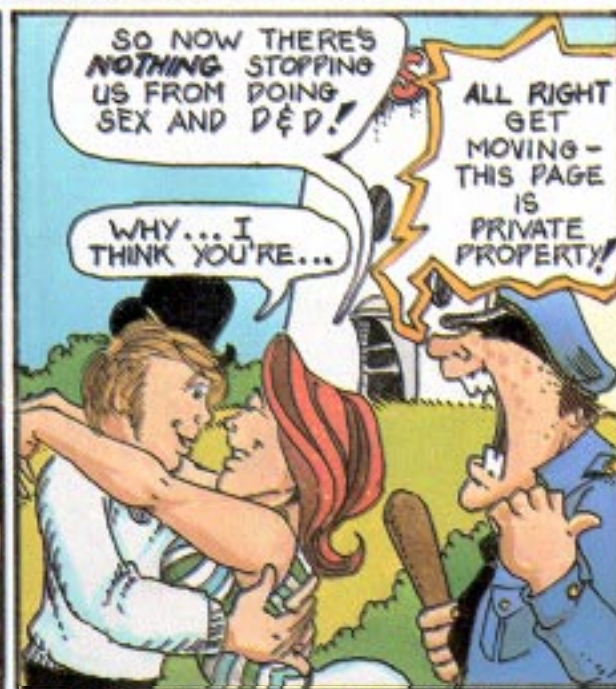
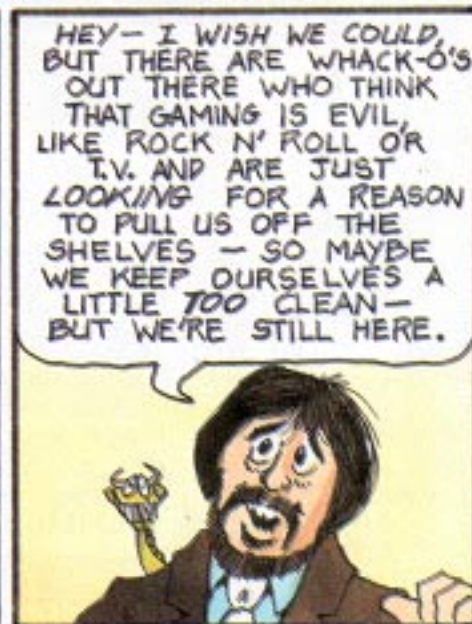
THEN WE'LL ASK THEM!











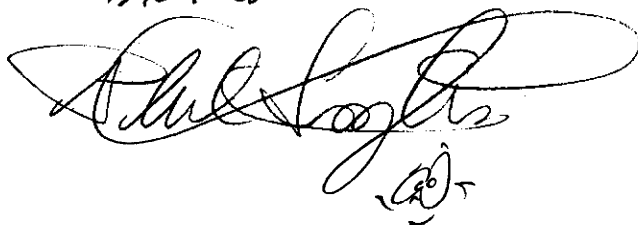


Dear Readers

As you might have guessed from this month's *What's New*, the strip is leaving *Dragon* magazine. What is inaccurate is the implication the strip gives that I was fired. I was not. The decision to end *What's New* was mine entirely. I've been doing *What's New* for 3 years now, and I feel that it's time to take a break. My relationship with the *Dragon* staff is and always has been on very good terms. They have said that *What's New* can return any time, and I might well take them up on that. In the meantime I'll be keeping busy. Projects in the works include continuing the *Dave Torgent* comic, a comic adaptation of Robert Asprin's book "Another Fine Myth" and a book on a character known as "Buck Goodol - zap gun for hire". I will also be collecting the entire run of "What's New?" into book form along with new material.

Now some of you may be asking "Well if you weren't fired, why does it say you were in 'What's New?'" All I can say to that is it wasn't how I'd planned on ending the strip, but that's how it happened. Occasionally "What's New?" wrote itself.

You helped. Thanks



Dear Phil,

I think it's going to be a problem for me to remember to not leave two or three pages in the back end of the magazine for "What's New?" I imagine you'll have a much easier time remembering not to draw it — but don't be surprised if I call you up a month from now and say, "I don't care if you quit or not. I need three pages!!"

Actually, if I ever do try to get you to reconsider, it won't be for what I want — it'll be on behalf of thousands of our readers who have palpitated over every one of your panels since Phil and Dixie rummaged through that hobby shop in "What's New?" #1 three years ago. You may think it's time "to take a break," as your letter says; you may feel that you're out of good ideas, like you told me on the phone when you broke the news to me. But don't try to tell that to all the people who turn to the back of the magazine first — they even read Phil & Dixie before they read my stuff, if you can believe that. I don't think I'm speaking out of turn when I say that they will miss you just as much as we will — and we will miss you a lot.

Sure, we've had our differences. (Do you want to write the best-selling expose, or should I?) But they've all been small, especially compared to the miles and miles of smiles that you and "What's New?" have brought into the world. I've always admired people who could step back from the peak of an accomplishment, have the good sense to know when they're at the top, and then step on to something else without falling down. I guess you've made that trip, to the peak of this accomplishment, and everything I have to say really boils down to this: Thanks for taking us along for the ride.





"I'M SORRY, BUT YOU MUST HAVE THE WRONG PAGE."

**Featherbed**  
by Kurt Erichsen No. 3

Tal Alan  
Avenging heroes grow weary of petty challenges.  
Zap! Roll a 9 or higher or you're dead!

Okay, I give the horde of trolls my *Plus-14 Glance of Ill-Will...* and I roll a 17.

Well, the heads of the 10,000 nearest trolls pop off, and all the rest faint at the sight of blood. You're out three silver pieces because your boots are ruined.

CASTLE DUNDER SLUSH

But suddenly a trap door opens, and you are dumped in front of Odin, the All-Father, who is a bit... perturbed... at your interrupting his dinner.

Mortal, stop washing your hair in my soup!

Oh, come off it, Tal! Don't you have anything challenging in your dungeon?

Yeah! I'll just flick my *Elixir of Entropy* at him!

CASTLE DUNDER SLUSH

Uh... you're right... the Almighty Father of the Universe just evaporated into a cloud of steam!

We've been in too many dungeons to trifle with these petty little confrontations you're throwing at us.

Well-- suddenly the sun goes supernova, the planet splits apart, and a fifty-foot tsunami of magma rushes at you!

My character cleans his finger-nails.

My character considers raising his staff to cast a spell.

CASTLE DUNDER SLUSH



# WORMY



'EY WOIMY!

WHATCHA GONNA DO WIT' ALL DEM FISH?



FISH?  
WHAT FISH?



DA ONES YA GOT  
IN DAT BIG CRATE...  
BACK IN DA DEN.

THERE'S  
NO FISH  
IN THAT  
CRATE.



DER  
AINT? NOPE.

WULL HOW  
COME IT SEZ  
"COD" ON IT?



IT SAYS, "C.O.D."

'EY!  
I CAN  
READ!

IRVING...

DON'T  
YOU KNOW  
WHAT C.O.D.  
MEANS?

WUT?



COUGH-UP OR DIE.  
...IT'S A SPECIAL  
BILLING PROCEEDURE.

OH...

YOU RUN INTO IT  
A LOT WHEN YOU  
DEAL WITH THE  
UNDERWORLD.



SO WHAT'S IN  
DA CRATE?

THAT'S  
"SIEGE OF  
THE IRON  
KEEP"...

EH?

... THAT WARGAME I  
ORDERED 4 MONTHS AGO.



MAN!  
I HOID OF  
OVER-SIZED  
PACKAGIN'  
BUT DAT'S  
REDICULOUS!

WHAT ARE  
YOU TALKING  
ABOUT?



DAT BOX  
IS FOITY  
FEET LONG  
AN' TWENNY  
FEET TALL!







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